POPULAR
HISTORY OF THE JEWS

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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WITH A SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME OF RECENT EVENTS
By DR. MAX RAISIN

EDITED BY

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VOL. I.

FROM THE FORMATION OF THE NATION TO THE DEATH OF ANTIGONUS THE ASMONEAN (37 B. C. E.)

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

The invitation to undertake a new translation o Graetz's famous History of the Jews was first extended to me by the Hebrew Publishing Company in the spring of 1911. The justification of this enterprise was to be two-fold. The price of the new edition was to be comparatively so low as to bring it within the reach of a wider public, thus popularizing the reading of Jewish history; and it was to be brought up to date, that is, supplemented by chapters dealing with the history of the Jewish people within the last sixty or seventy years. Flattering as that invitation was, I hesitated to accept it, because I did not feel equal to the task, but the cordial insistence of several eminent rabbis, whom I consulted, finally dispelled my scruples, and I entered upon my task late in 1911. The many demands made upon a rabbi's time in a great health resort like this left me less leisure than I anticipated, and I had about completed the translation in the summer of 1914. I then proceeded to prepare the supplementary chapters, but untoward circumstances prevented me from accomplishing this task. The publishers in consequence assigned the task of writing the supplementary chapters to someone else, to one who is probably more competent than myself to do it justice. I regret this failure of mine to complete the work all the more deeply, because it was the first opportunity given a Jewish historian to embody in permanent form the epic events of the last few years—and, as a conse-

quence of the British Declaration, to announce the glad tidings of the approaching restoration of Israel.

As to the translation itself, I can only hope for the indulgence of the reader, who is the final judge as to its merits. I wish to add that I have endeavored to render it as readable as I could without sacrificing the vigor of the original. The text employed is that of the "Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden," which was published in Leipsic in 1888, in three volumes, and is briefer and more compact than the eleven-volume edition. I did, however, always consult the larger edition, which I always had before me, and drew upon it when I deemed it necessary. I have also drawn freely upon S. P. Rabinowitz's Hebrew Edition, particularly in dealing with the history of the Jews of Russia and Poland, and have, of course, given it due credit. In the last chapter of the text, the treatment of the Reform Movement in Germany is so palpably biased as to be hardly of any critical value. I trust, however, that the editor has called the reader's attention to the injustice done the pioneers of the Reform Movement in Germany.

My sincere thanks are hereby extended to Dr. M. F. Mount of this city, whose criticism of my translation proved so very helpful. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Alexander Harkavy of New York, the eminent Jewish scholar and lexicographer, who kindly consented to revise and edit this work, and to whose thoroughness is due whatever of special merit this edition may possess.

A. B. RHINE.

Hot Springs, Ark., January 14, 1919.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The German edition, from which this translation was made, is arranged in three volumes, but for the convenience of the American reader it has been deemed wise to make the present edition into five books. This new division necessitated a rearrangement of some chapters and sections. Thus, part of Chapter IX and the whole of Chapter X of "The Judaeo-Spanish Period" (Original, Vol. II) have been made into a separate section under the title of "Persecutions in France and Germany" (Translation, Vol. IV), and Chapters V-XI of "The Humanistic and Reformation Period" (Orig., Vol. III) have been made into a separate section under the title of "The Jews in Europe from the Middle of the 16th to the Middle of the 18th Century" (Transl., Vol. V).

The reader's attention is called to the appendix to Vol. II, consisting of extracts from Draper's "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe" on the part the Jews have played in the intellectual development of the Saracens and Christians. These excerpts are highly instructive, and containing, as they do, a glowing tribute to our race from an eminent non-Jewish writer, they will make pleasant reading for Jews.

Dr. Rhine, in his preface, expresses his displeasure at Graetz's attitude toward reformed Judaism, and he expects the editor to call the reader's attention to the injustice done the pioneers of the reform movement in Germany. The editor, however, believes he must not obtrude himself upon the public, but leave this question, as all other questions connected with the contents of this work, to the judgment of the reader. As for the rest, Graetz's views on reformed Judaism will be found to be counterbalanced by the pages devoted to this subject in the supplementary volume of Dr. Max Raisin.

ALEXANDER HARKAVY.

New York, January 23, 1919.

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THE PRIMEVAL AGE

CHAPTER I

THE SETTLEMENT AND FORMATION OF THE NATION

A country situated on the shore of a surging sea, and offering a diversification of mountains and valleys, hills and dales, will impel its inhabitants to the performance of uncommon deeds. If, in addition, that country presents some special, natural peculiarities, such as a regularity of rainfall and of seasons, a generally high temperature resulting in exuberant fertility and luxurious vegetation, an atmosphere clear and free from fog the greater part of the year, and other such phenomena which excite attention, it will stimulate its inhabitants to higher impulses, and awaken within them the development of a psychic life all their own. Were such a people, from infancy, to form a conception, no matter how vague, that it was destined for some great purpose which was to distinguish it from other peoples; and were its leaders to foster that vague conception until it takes the shape of a firm conviction, then such a people, amidst such an environment, will inevitably assume indelible characteristics and a peculiar individuality.

Such a country was the Land of Canaan (Palestine), the southern border of Phoenicia, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea; and the people

that settled there were the Children of Israel, or the Israelites. Already before their settlement in Canaan the Israelites went through some experiences that appeared miraculous to them. Driven by famine, the seventy souls that migrated from Canaan, the original home of the founders of the tribe, to Egypt, where they were well received at first, had grown in northern Egypt (the Land of Goshen) into seventy families, grouped into twelve tribes. The Israelites would have remained in Egypt indefinitely, and would have gradually become amalgamated with the Egyptians, had they not been reduced to slavery by a king who feared that their increasing numbers might lead them to lay violent hands on Egypt. This king forced them to build store cities, and possibly also to erect gigantic obelisks and imposing pyramids to serve as mausoleums. On the other hand, the condition of slavery would, in time, have reduced them to a state of savagery had it not been for the memory of their ancestors which they kept alive—the memory of the patriarch Abraham, an ideal of generosity and of loyalty to God, of his son Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, Israel, who suffered many tribulations and whose son, Joseph, had been a benefactor of Egypt. The Israelites felt their subjection all the more keenly since they regarded it as an act of base ingratitude.

To these reminiscences belonged also the peculiar view of God held by the patriarchs who worshipped one God, the creator of the world, a God of justice and righteousness, in contrast with the animal worship of the Egyptians. While to the great mass of the Israelites, crushed beneath the yoke of servitude, this religious contrast and even the very conception of God had become dim, the legacy of the patriarchs was saved from oblivion by a few superior spirits, especially among the tribe of Levi. To

Mount Sinai

this tribe belonged Moses and Aaron, the sons of Amram and Jochebed. Moses, the first and greatest of the prophets, was a leader and lawgiver without peer, and, in addition, a man of modesty and meekness; while his older brother, Aaron, more eloquent than he, was his mouthpiece. Both demanded in vain of one of the Pharaohs (whose identity is uncertain) permission for their tribesmen to leave the country. One of the Pharaohs was finally compelled to give them this permission, after several plagues had visited his country and nation. This exodus from Egypt transformed the slaves into a people. Several wonderful occurrences followed: the passage of the Sea of Reeds (the Crocodile Sea.*), the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, and, above all, the giving of the Decalog on Mount Sinai,** the basis of a purer conception of God and of a loftier morality. Prevented by hostile tribes from following the shortest course from the south to the Land of Canaan, the Israelites had to wander in zig-zag fashion through the wilderness for forty years, and to make a long detour to the east. The younger generation, reared in freedom by Moses, was many times called upon to resort to the sword. All these strange experiences encouraged the Israelites to make an effort to take possession of the promised land.

After the death of the great prophet, whose burial place remained unknown in order to prevent his admirers from worshipping him as a god or a demi-god, his disciple, Joshua, son of Nun, led the Israelites across the Jordan and began the conquest. Inspired with confidence by the vic-

* Not the Red Sea or the Gulf of Suez.

** Or Horeb, probably Jabel al-araif, in the Wilderness of Paran, near the southern border of the Holy Land, by no means one of the high peaks of the so-called Sinaitic Peninsula, neither Jabal Musa, nor Jabal Catherine, or Jabal Serbal southwest of it.

tories won over the two powerful chiefs, Sihon and Og, on the east of the Jordan, the Israelites, by impetuous attacks in large numbers, easily overpowered the small bands of the natives that opposed them. The Land of Canaan was partitioned among a number of petty kings (about thirty-one), who ruled, for the most part, only over one city and its environs, and who were probably kept apart by mutual jealousies, and had no common bond of union. Moreover, the courage of the natives was shaken by the reported victories over the kings east of the Jordan, won by a mighty people that left Egypt and was fighting with the help of its god. The inhabitants of four cities, the Gibeonites, were so overawed by these reports that they threw themselves upon the mercy of the Israelites, who reduced them to a state of serfdom. Thus, under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites subjected many isolated tribes and petty kings, and took possession of the central portion of the country, and a section of the south. The conquest of the north, however, was much more difficult. The northern tribes were more warlike and possessed iron war-chariots. Moreover, several of the Israelitish tribes refused to fight any further, but preferred to settle in the territories which they had already acquired, and to enjoy their possessions in peace. Such action destroyed the unity that prevailed among the Israelites hitherto, and weakened their position in consequence.

This state of affairs was due especially to the self-seeking of the tribe of Joseph. This tribe, subdivided into Ephraim and Manasseh, claimed a certain pre-eminence, both because its members were descendants of Joseph, and especially because Joshua, the leader of all the people, belonged to their tribe. Accordingly, the tribe of Ephraim took possession of the mountainous district north and

south of Shechem, itself situated between the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal. This region was exceedingly fertile, with an abundance of springs, and a diversification of valleys and mountains (named, after the tribe, the Mountains of Ephraim). The two tribes, however, did not rest content with their fertile territory. In expectation of the support of Joshua, their fellow tribesman, they complained that the land assigned to them was not sufficient for their numerous families, and demanded not only the fertile plain extending for a distance of many miles north of the Mountains of Ephraim, but also the land beyond, reaching to Mount Tabor. To these demands Joshua replied ironically that they had his permission to clear the forests, and to conquer the northern mountains, since they were so numerous. Smarting under the rebuff of Joshua, those selfish tribes withdrew from any further participation in the undertakings of the other tribes.

The withdrawal of the tribes of Joseph was the signal for other tribes to do likewise, and four of these turned to the north and four to the south and west. The tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali, bolder than the Ephraimites, settled partly in the plain of Jezreel (Esdraelon), and penetrated to the northern highlands at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains. Unable to cope with the war chariots of the natives, the tribe of Issachar had to satisfy itself with the pasture lands it obtained, and even submitted to the Canaanites of the district. Zebulun succeeded in wresting a home in the highlands north of Mount Tabor. Asher and Naphtali, confronted by a Canaanitish confederacy under the leadership of King Jabin of Hazor, appealed to Joshua for assistance. Fortunately, the tribes still retained enough of the spirit of unity to rally around Joshua in support of their hard-pressed

brethren of the north. Joshua surprised the Canaanitish confederacy under King Jabin at the Sea of Merom, and routed them so completely that Asher and Naphtali remained in undisturbed possession of the north, eastward to the upper Jordan, and westward to the Mediterranean. These were the northernmost tribes, and became, in a measure, the guardians of the boundary line.

At the same time, four other tribes were exerting themselves to find homes in the south. The small tribe of Benjamin received, probably from the descendants of Joseph with whom it was closely allied, a narrow and not a very fertile tract of land, the former home of the Gibeonites, with some extensions east and west. To penetrate further south was very difficult. The Jebusites, a powerful and warlike tribe, occupied the center of the territory, protected by the rocky and inaccessible Mount Zion. The inhabitants of the plain to the west possessed war-chariots against which the Israelites were powerless. However, there was nothing left for the remaining tribes but to look about for territory in the South and in the West and to settle there. Among them was Judah, one of the most numerous and powerful tribes, with its vassal, the tribe of Simeon.

The small tribe of Dan fared worst of all. The Danites appear to have been a vassal tribe of Ephraim, but that self-seeking tribe turned over to the Danites an insecure territory, difficult to maintain, in the southwest portion of its own domain or, more correctly, in that of Benjamin. The Emorites prevented the Danites from settling in the plain of Sharon, and forced them back to the mountains from which, again, they were driven back by the Ephraimites and the Benjaminites. The Danites were thus compelled to wander for a time, and to migrate finally to the far north. Reuben

and Gad had settled to the east of the Jordan even before the crossing of that river by the other tribes.

In spite of all difficulties, the conquest of the greater part of the land of Canaan proceeded so rapidly as to appear miraculous. Hardly fifty years before, the Israelites were scared out of their wits by the report of the spies that that country was inhabited by giants, against whom it would be impossible to contend; now, these much-feared aborigines were themselves thrown into such a state of fear by the Israelites that most of them gave up their possessions without resistance, and those who resisted were overthrown. The Israelites were, therefore, impressed with the conviction that God himself was fighting on the side of their armies; and the gift of song with which they were endowed impelled them to glorify the exodus, the wandering in the wilderness, and the conquest and possession of Canaan in lofty poetic strains.

Meager as was the allotment of some tribes, such as Simeon and Dan, they still possessed territories of their own as a starting point for future expansion. The tribe of Levi, however, received no allotment at all, in accordance with the instruction of Moses. Unlike the Egyptian priests, who deprived the people of their land under religious pretenses and formed a rich caste, the Levites, as the priestly tribe, were to remain poor, depending upon the land and cattle owners for their maintenance, and were to devote their entire attention to the sanctuary and the law. At first, their centre of activity was at Gilgal, the camp between the Jordan and Jericho, where the Tabernacle containing the Ark and the two Tablets of the Covenant was erected, and where sacrifices were offered. However, as soon as conditions became stable, a more central location had to be found for the sanctuary; and, under the prevailing circumstances, such loca-

tion had to be in Ephraim. Accordingly, Shiloh was selected for that purpose, and thither the Ark of the Covenant was brought and an altar erected there. While not the rallying point for all the tribes, Shiloh was within easy reach of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Phinehas, the high priest of the house of Aaron, and his successors took up their residence in Shiloh. While many Levites made this sanctuary their home, others scattered themselves among the other tribes, and settled in other cities.

With the settlement of the Israelites, the Land of Canaan assumed not only a different name, but also a different character. It became a Holy Land, the heritage of God. To the land itself was ascribed both the power to help Israel fulfill his calling as a model of justice and holiness, as well as the susceptibility to feel whether the conduct of the people was pleasing or offensive to God. The land could not tolerate the abominations of murder, incest and idolatry; as a consequence of these it destroyed the aborigines, and the Israelites would share the same fate if guilty of these vices. The Israelites regarded all other countries as unclean, but looked upon the Holy Land as endowed with peculiar divine gifts.

As a matter of fact, no other country presents so many striking peculiarities and contrasts as does the Land of Israel, as it is called since the entrance of the Israelites, within so short a space (about one hundred and forty miles in length and fifty-six miles in width, inclusive of the territory east of the Jordan). The snow-capped Lebanon and Hermon on the north look down upon a series of hills and valleys reaching to the sandy wastes of the south, where the African heat scorches all vegetation. Species of trees that usually grow in widely different climates thrive here in close proximity to each other: the slender palm-tree which

thrives only in high temperatures and the oak which cannot endure such heat. The hot blood of the southerner that ordinarily renders him so impetuous and passionate is here tempered by the cold winds that blow from the northern snow-fields. The land is framed in by water on two sides: on the west by the Mediterranean Sea which forms harbors for ships on its coast, and on the east by the Jordan which runs in nearly a straight line from north to south, and is marked off by two inland seas, the Sea of Kinereth (Sea of Tiberias), in the north, and the Salt Sea, in the south. These two seas also form a contrast to each other. The water of the Sea of Kinereth is fresh, and swarms with a variety of fish, while on its shores there flourish palm trees, fig trees, vines and other fruit trees. The high temperature ripens the fruit in its vicinity about a month sooner than on the hills. The Salt Sea has an opposite effect, and is rightly called the Dead Sea because vertebrates cannot live in its waters on account of the salt, magnesia, and asphalt, which they contain. The very air is laden with salt, and the soil, full of salt pits, is a dreary waste. The oval-shaped ravine that surrounds the Dead Sea, the walls of which rise here and there to an altitude of thirteen hundred feet and which is devoid of all vegetation, gives the entire neighborhood a gloomy appearance, and yet, on its shores, between water-level and mountain slope, there are found extremely rich oases, which produce the rarest of balm plants. Near the centre of its western shore is the fertile oasis of Engedi. In the southwest corner of the Dead Sea was the still more fertile oasis where once stood the city of Zoar, called the City of Palms (Tamara). In the northeast, near the city of Betharam, a distance of five and a half miles from the Dead Sea, there grew the far-famed balm of Gilead, while salt marshes

abound along the same sea for a distance of several miles. Both on the shores of the Sea of Kinereth and the Dead Sea, there bubble forth hot springs (Callirhoe, east of the Dead Sea, and Ammaus, on the Sea of Kinereth), which are impregnated with sulphur and possess curative properties for certain diseases.

The mountains of the Land of Israel proved a great blessing to the country. Two majestic mountain ranges, separated by a valley, rise in the north like two hoary giants: the Lebanon, with a height of over ten thousand feet at its highest peak, and the Hermon (anti-Libanus), whose highest peak was nine thousand three hundred feet high. The Lebanon range never belonged to Israel, but to the Phoenicians, Syrians, and their successors; but the Israelites utilized the famous cedar forests of those mountains to a great extent. The steep precipice of the anti-Libanus range in the south formed the northern boundary of the Land of Israel.

The spurs of these two mountain ranges form, in the north, the mountains of Israel, which slope down gradually to the large, fertile plain of Jezreel. This triangular plain, with Mount Carmel on the one side and Mount Gilboa, with its neighboring Mount Tabor (Itabirium) on the other, divides the country into two uneven parts, the northern division (later called Galilee) being the smaller of the two. South of the Plain of Jezreel the land rises again, forming the mountains of Ephraim, some of which are over two thousand feet high; while southward, between Jerusalem and Hebron, the Mountains of Judah rise to a height of three thousand feet, sloping down gradually to only seven hundred feet at the border city of Beersheba. From the edge of the mountains to the Mediterranean, there stretched the Plain of Sharon and the lowland (Shephelah). In the east the mountains sloped

PLACE NEAR THE SALT SEA

WELL IN PALESTINE

down to the Jordan. Several summits of the mountains of Ephraim and Judah acquired a special significance: Mount Gerizim (Mount of Blessings) and Mount Ebal (Mount of Curses), near Shechem, Bethel in the east, Mizpah, and finally Mount Zion (2,610 feet) to the southwest and the Mount of Olives (2,720 feet), east of Jerusalem.

This peculiar structure of the land produces a diversity not only in the products of the soil but also in the character of the people. From north to south the country is divided into three zones: the wide mountain-zone takes in the middle, the lowland the west of the Mediterranean, and the pasture land the east of the Jordan. In the lowland the climate is mild, in the mountains rough in the rainy season and temperate in the hot season, in the meadows of the Jordan hot the greater part of the year.

Rivers, in the proper sense of the word, that retain their waters throughout the year, the country possesses none or only one, the Jordan, and even that is not navigable. It is of value only in that it lends fertility in the spring to the low lying plains on both of its shores, particularly of the eastern one, when the melting snow from the Hermon supplies it with an abundance of water. The other waters are really no streams, since they run dry in the summer. Such winter streams nevertheless lend fertility to the districts through which they flow; the fields under cultivation lie on such winter streams. Fertility is further enhanced by the small springs that descend from the mountains but do not flow together to form a stream. The districts that contain no springs are supplied with drinking water by the rain which is gathered in cisterns hewn in the rocks. The formation of the soil, the rich supply of water descending from the Lebanon and the Hermon and their spurs, the springs, and

the heavy rainfall in the autumn and at the beginning of the spring, rendered the greater part of the country exceedingly fertile, the plains yielding two crops a year. It was, and still is, in fact, a land "flowing with milk and honey," a beautiful land "of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and mountains, a land of wheat and barley, and of the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, wherein thou shalt not lack anything, a land the stones whereof are iron, and out of the mountains of which thou shalt hew copper." (Deut. 8: 7-10). Of the Land of Ephraim the poet sang:

"Blessed of the Lord is his land,
For the precious things in heaven, for the dew,
And for the deep that croucheth beneath,
And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun,
And for the precious things put forth by the moon,
And for the chief things of the ancient mountains." (Deut. 33: 13-15.)

The mountain slopes were covered with gardens and vineyards, and the mountains with forests of terebinths, oaks, and yew trees. In some especially adapted spots, there rose slender palms which yielded sweet fruit. Southward, however, the fertility of the soil diminished because of the lime hills which predominated there, though even this region afforded pasturage for cattle. South of Hebron the land was a barren waste.

On account of the mountains and the uninterrupted currents of air from the heights and the sea, the climate of the country is salubrious, producing a strong race of men. There are no pesti-

lential swamps to poison the air. Diseases are rare unless brought about by external injuries. Epidemics, too, are rare, and even now occur only when brought in from the outside.

In addition, the country offers inspiration for the soul. Its size is insignificant compared with the extensive empires of antiquity. From certain points on the mountain peaks in the centre of the country one can see at a glance the entire extent of the land from east to west, the waves of the Mediterranean on the one side, and the surface of the Dead Sea, with the Jordan and Mount Gilead, on the other. From Mount Hermon one can see still farther. But how inspiring a sight it is! The most beautiful and magnificent scenery presents itself to one's view. The clearness and transparency of the atmosphere, which prevail the greater part of the year, bring distant points within easy ken. The beautifully formed peaks and the undulatory mountain ridges do not overwhelm the soul like the heaven-reaching giant Himalayas and overawe it with their fantastically wild ruggedness, but lift it softly and gently above things sordid and infuse into it a susceptibility to things lovely, homelike, familiar. To the impressionable soul the finger of God is visible in these natural phenomena: "Tabor and Hermon praise His name." The true, profound poetry of nature had its origin on this spot. The lofty conception, but recently acknowledged, that the God of nature is also the God of history is a product of a people that possessed a keen eye for the unusual and the wonderful.

Gilead, on the east of the Jordan, the possession of Reuben and Gad, resembles the trans-Jordanic territory in some respects, but the sea cannot be seen from that side, or, at best, only as a blue thread. As far as historic records go, Gilead produced not a single poet and gave birth to only one

prophet, and he was as rugged and as wild as the mountains and the ravines of his native land. The Jordan formed not only a natural, but also a spiritual line of demarcation between the two sections. The country west of the Jordan had the further advantage over Gilead, in that at the time of the conquest the Israelites had found there many well-established cities with a well-regulated civic life, while in Gilead the cities were few and far apart.

The conquest of the territory west of the Jordan was far from complete; large tracts of land still remained in the possession of the natives. It is no longer possible to ascertain to what extent Joshua himself was responsible for this state of affairs. His advanced age may have weakened his hold on his people. Certain it is, however, that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, in settling down to the enjoyment of their choice possessions, checked the ardor of conquest on the part of the remaining tribes, who, likewise, sought the rest long denied them. Again, each tribe, fighting singly, was unable to cope with the natives. Thus, the entire coast land, the partly fertile and partly sandy lowland, from Gaza or from the River of Egypt (Rhinocolura) to Acco, and from Acco to Tyre and Sidon further north, remained independent and never formed a part of the land of Israel even in later times. The northern portion belonged to the Phoenicians, the southern to the Philistines. Many tribes thus lived either in the neighborhood or in the midst of heathen peoples. The tribes of Judah and Simeon, entirely cut off from their northern brethren by the Jebusites, were completely surrounded by foreign peoples, some of whom were marauding tribes living by the sword.

If Joshua, in his old age, was filled with joy at the thought that the promise made to the patriarchs had been fulfilled, his joy was not unclouded. As

Mount Gerizim

City of Jericho

it often happens in the life of individuals and of nations, the realization was entirely different from the dream. Hardly half of the territory of Canaan was in the possession of Israel, and even this half could be wrested from their hands by the united efforts of the remaining aborigines. The unfinished part of his task must have caused Joshua some uneasiness in his last days, especially because he could find no man capable of leadership to take his place, at least none to whom the tribes, particularly the overbearing tribe of Ephraim, would submit. At his death the people were left without a leader, but they did not even realize their loss, and did not mourn after their second leader as they did after the first. But Joshua left to his people, as a legacy, the hope and the prospect that, at some future time, the entire Land of Promise would come into the possession of Israel. Hopes to which nations cling tenaciously become realities as a rule. But many trials awaited Israel before that hope could become a reality.

One must bear in mind that their neighbors were the mortal enemies of the Israelites from the beginning. Even if the neighboring peoples did not have the least suspicions that the new Law of Israel contemplated the total annihilation of their own gods and religions, they hated the intruders who took violent possession of a great portion of their territory. The Israelites had either to fight to the death, or to reach some amicable relations with their neighbors; but as they could not possibly engage in warfare, since, after the death of Joshua, there was no leader, no unity, and little desire for fighting, they fell back on the latter choice. This suited the Canaanites and the Phoenicians for the time being, since they were engaged in commercial pursuits, and this arrangement left the caravan routes open and enabled them to carry

on their trading undisturbed. But the border peoples, the Philistines in the southwest, the Edomites in the south, the Ammonites and the Moabites in Gilead, east of the Jordan, harassed and oppressed Israel whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The Israelites paid dearly for the peace of which they were so sorely in need, and not infrequently did they sacrifice the interests of their fellow tribes because of that need. In order to maintain friendly relations with their neighbors and to render their own position secure in the future, they intermarried with the Canaanites. Such intermarriages took place mostly among the border tribes whose very existence depended upon their friendly relations with the neighboring peoples. Between intermarriage with the neighboring heathens and participation in their idolatrous worship there was only one step. The natives already possessed shrines and places of pilgrimage with which were associated certain myths that appealed to their simple minds. Certain spots in the mountains and valleys of Israel already enjoyed a sacred character, and the great mass of the Israelites who had but a vague conception of the difference between their own God and the gods of the heathens, had little scruple in participating in the sacrificial meals of their neighbors and in their worship which strongly appealed to the senses. The worship of the Israelites, on the other hand, had as yet assumed no definite form. The sacrifice was at that time, and even later, the chief expression of religiousness, and the religiously inclined had either to erect a private shrine or worship at an established sanctuary. The law of Sinai had as yet no representative to teach a new cult; the Levites, scattered among the tribes, with no property of their own, were poor and not much respected. Thus, habit, the passion for imitation, and the sensuous attract-

iveness of the heathen worship, combined to lead the Israelites to adopt the cult of their neighbors. Accordingly, high places in the Land of Israel were filled with altars and obelisks (Mazebot). The worship of Baal (Adonis) and Astarte, the sun and moon gods of the Phoenicians who surpassed the Israelites in the arts of civilization, became very popular, and mummy-like Teraphim, or household gods, were adopted as protecting divinities.

But the memories of the miraculous occurrences of the past were not totally forgotten, and formed an invisible bond that united the tribes, despite their separation and participation in idolatry. These traditions were handed down from father to son; and, in days of tribulations, individuals and tribes dwelt fondly upon the past: "Where are the wonders of God of which our fathers told us when He brought us out of Egypt to this land?" The choicer spirits preserved a vivid recollection of the experiences at the flaming Sinai, and some even denounced idolatry and pointed back to the time when Israel enjoyed the divine favor. Most likely it was some Levites, the priests of the sanctuary at Shiloh, who, from time to time, raised their voices against the idolatrous practices of the people, possibly in popular assemblies, especially in times of trouble. However, even if a preacher succeeded in impressing the people for the moment, his words had no lasting effect. The inclination to form a closer union with their neighbors and to imitate their customs was too strong to be overcome so readily.

Thus, one evil brought another in its train. The self-seeking of Ephraim compelled the other tribes to look out for themselves, and broke up the tribal union. This selfishness made united action impossible. Since no tribe could count upon the assistance of the other tribes in case of need, all of them

were forced to assume amicable relations with their heathen neighbors, intermarry with them, participate in their idolatrous rites, and adopt their customs and vices. This religious estrangement was the result of a lack of tribal unity. But even this humiliating submissiveness could not bring about undisturbed peace and independence.

As soon as the hostile neighbors felt strong enough, they made the Israelites realize that they were intruders, who must be either destroyed or subdued. After the death of Joshua deplorable conditions set in. Tribe after tribe was attacked, humiliated, and even reduced to servitude. It is true that in times of great peril there arose men of zeal and courage, commonly called Judges, who performed heroic deeds and succeeded, at least while the danger continued, in uniting several tribes for the purpose of common defense. But even the most heroic among them, such as the enthusiastic Barak, the brave Gideon and Jephtha, and the poetic Deborah, could not create permanent order and establish a lasting inter-tribal union, nor were they in a position to eradicate idolatry and to champion the cause of their own religion. Nor did the twelve or thirteen Judges of this or that tribe, who defeated the enemy successively or simultaneously, succeed in expelling the hostile neighbors from Israel's borders for any length of time, or in creating conditions of security. One of the Judges, Jair of Gilead, of the tribe of Manasseh, did, indeed, extend the northern boundary of Israel by annexing the territory of Bashan, east of the Jordan, and enabled the half tribe of Manasseh to settle there. This extension, however, had little effect upon the conditions of the country west of the Jordan. The Judges seem to have been of importance only in the periods of peril, when they were called upon to drive the enemy back, to avert dangers,

THE TERAPHIM (IDOLS)

and to establish some sort of security. Otherwise they possessed no power or authority even over the tribes whom they served most by their brave exploits. In spite of their occasional victories, the isolation of the tribes continued and their internal weakness grew apace. Samson's pranks did not deter the Philistines from mistreating the Israelites as their slaves, and even Jephtha's victory over the Ammonites did not frighten these hostile neighbors into giving up their claims to the possession of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, east of the Jordan.

It was, however, this very state of general helplessness that finally brought about a reaction. Individual tribal chiefs came to the realization that this catering to the neighbors and the adoption of their worship had not improved matters, but rendered them worse. The memory of the God of their fathers must have revived again and disturbed their conscience, and this led to a revival of the worship at Shiloh which, towards the end of the period of the Judges, thus became the most prominent sanctuary of Israel. There were Levites there who were still the guardians of the law of Moses, and it was possibly they who, at the popular assemblies, gathered at the shrine to discuss the deplorable condition of the Israelites, led the people to the conviction that their defection from the God of Israel and their clinging to the Canaanitish idols were the cause of their present misery.

There lived at that time in Shiloh an aged priest, worthy of the ancestry of Aaron, Eli by name, who is described as venerable in appearance, meek and gentle, incapable of harshness even towards his unworthy sons. The pure and saintly life of such a hoary sage must have gained warm adherents for the teachings which he represented. To the ever-increasing number of the despondent Israel-

ites who came to Shiloh from Ephraim and Benjamin to complain about the outrages on the part of the Philistines, and from Gilead to lament over their mistreatment at the hands of the Ammonites, Eli spoke of the God of their fathers who is ever ready to deliver them, and admonished them to forsake their idols. A number of the elders turned from the Baalim to their own God as a result of Eli's teaching, and many of their tribesmen followed their example.

Eli was by nature a man of peace and not a warrior. The Israelitish priests were not fighters, as a rule, though Eli is included among the Judges and heroes of Israel. His military activity could have consisted only in encouraging the armies, when they sought his advice and guidance, to rely upon the God of their fathers, and to defend themselves against the repeated assaults of their enemies.

Had Eli's sons succeeded to the office held by their father, there would have possibly arisen in Israel an hereditary hierarchy, just as, among many other nations, the heroic age gave way to an hierarchical age. Circumstances, however, turned out differently. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, did not follow in their father's footsteps. The great calamity that soon befell the people and the house of Eli itself, was regarded as a divine punishment for the offences of Eli's sons and for Eli's own indulgence towards them.

For the Philistines, who made frequent raids among the Israelites, had attacked Israel again, and the tribes concerned prepared to defend themselves this time in regular battle array, though the Philistines with their war-chariots had the advantage over them. At the advice of the elders of Israel the Ark of the Covenant was brought over from Shiloh, in the belief that its mere presence would

insure victory to the Israelites. But the armies of Israel were put to flight, the Ark was captured by the Philistines, Eli's sons were killed, and the Philistines spread terror throughout the district. A messenger brought the news of the catastrophe to the expectant multitude and the high priest at Shiloh: "Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there had also been a great slaughter among the people, and also thy sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the Ark of God hath been taken." The news of the capture of the Ark terrified the hoary priest even more than that of the death of his sons. He fell from his seat, dead. The triumphant Philistines invaded the country as far as Shiloh and destroyed the city and the tabernacle, a memento of the glorious days of Moses. A later poet described this calamity with a still sorrowing heart:

"He (God) forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent which He placed among men;
He delivered His strength (the Ark) into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand."
—(Psalm 78: 61-62.)

This defeat crushed the strength and the courage of Israel completely. The very tribes that hitherto acted as champions of the common cause to some extent were now badly crippled, and the tribe of Ephraim suffered most, and not undeservedly. With the destruction of the sanctuary at Shiloh, which under Eli became a central place of assembly, the last connecting link with the northern tribes was broken.

The Philistines undoubtedly believed that, with the capture of the Ark and with the destruction of the sanctuary, they had likewise destroyed the

protecting God of Israel. In this, however, they were disagreeably mistaken. As soon as the Ark was brought to Ashdod (Azotus), the nearest Philistine city, the country was visited by all manners of plagues. Upon the advice of their priests and magicians, the terror-stricken Philistine lords determined to return the Ark to the Israelites, accompanied by atonement gifts. After a captivity of seven months the Ark was sent across the border line, and found shelter in a hill in Kirjath-jearim (Forest City). The Levites who had settled in that place watched over it, but the people at large missed it so little that many decades passed before any one thought about it. The demoralized people attached no great value either to the contents or to the great antiquity of the Tablets of the Covenant which the Ark contained.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM: SAMUEL AND SAUL

All the misfortunes which had befallen the Israelites served, in the end, to lead to better things. The people could not help realizing that the chaotic religious and political conditions which prevailed hitherto were responsible for the recent catastrophe. The Levites, who scattered themselves throughout the land after the destruction of Shiloh, embraced the opportunity to awaken the people to the necessity of the worship of the God of Israel. Perhaps the return of the Ark of the Covenant from Philistia was taken as a good omen and tended to revive hope. All that was needed now was a man of spirit and of zeal to point out the road to a people that walked in darkness. Such a man appeared just at the right time, and his activities changed the course of the history of Israel.

Samuel, son of Elkanah, was the man who reunited the scattered members of Israel, and checked their corruption. His greatness becomes evident from the circumstance that he is regarded as second to Moses, not merely in chronological succession, but also in prophetic importance. Samuel was a venerable personality, and a man of de-

termined character who was severe with himself and others. Living in the midst of the people and in constant touch with them, he excelled his generation in religious fervor, high-mindedness and unselfishness, and was distinguished, above all, by his prophetic gifts. He was descended from one of the most highly respected Levitical families that settled at Ramah, on the border line between Ephraim and Benjamin. His mother, Hannah, whose method of silent but fervent devotion became a model for all time, had placed him early in the care of Eli. Samuel thus became an officiating priest at the sanctuary of Shiloh, whose duty it was to open the gates every day, to assist at sacrifices, and also to spend the nights in the tabernacle. The gift of prophecy descended upon him unconsciously when he was quite young. Once, while asleep, he believed he heard his name called by a voice coming from the inmost chamber of the sanctuary where stood the Ark of the Covenant. This was Samuel's first prophetic vision. A short while later the Israelites sustained the great catastrophe at the hands of the Philistines. After the destruction of Shiloh, Samuel returned to his father's house at Ramah, undoubtedly disconsolate and humbled.

In the circle of the Levites, among whom Samuel was reared, the firm conviction was held that Israel's misfortunes were due to his defection from the God of his fathers, and the destruction of the sanctuary spelled to them the belief that God had forsaken his people. Meditating upon this fatal conclusion, Samuel seems to have come upon a different train of thought. *No sanctuary, no sacrifices.* True. But, is the sacrificial cult so essential to a pure divine worship and to holy conduct? This thought developed to full maturity in his mind, and on suitable occasions he presented it to the people.

Sacrifices were only of subordinate value, and the fat of rams does not bring about the divine favor. True worship consists in obeying the will of God. During his residence at Shiloh, Samuel had become acquainted not only with the Decalog, but also with the book of the Laws of Moses that had little or nothing to say about sacrifices but emphasized as divine commandments the ideals of justice, righteousness, benevolence and equality. Samuel, who was several centuries nearer the origin of Israel and his Law than the later prophets, was convinced, as they were, that God delivered the Israelites from Egypt not in order that they might bring sacrifices to Him and to no other, but rather in order that they might practice His laws. These laws were the will of God which the Israelites were to obey, and Samuel made himself their champion. To teach the people these commandments and to wean them from the evil practices of the heathens became the mission of his life. The living prophetic word was to be the means by which he was to accomplish his great purpose. Samuel was endowed with the fervent eloquence that moves men's hearts. Himself stirred by the prophetic visions that came to him, he communicated them to others, at first possibly in his native city of Ramah.

Such communications which were unusual and universal in their nature, he seems to have uttered in metric form, and in poetic imagery and figures. Even prior to his return to his father's house, the report had circulated that, while in Shiloh, Samuel had repeatedly been found worthy of prophetic revelations, and that these revelations had come true. The news soon spread through the neighborhood and through ever-widening circles that a prophet had arisen in Israel, even the son of Elkanah, upon whom rested the spirit of God as it did upon Moses. The very fact that God had sent

a second Moses inspired the people with renewed hope.

Samuel's first efforts were directed towards weaning the people away from Baal and Astarte, in which task the inclination of a portion of the people to forsake the idols stood him in good stead. The fiery eloquence with which he scorned the nullity of the heathen idols, the deceitfulness of their oracles and the tricks of their soothsayers, found an ever stronger response in the hearts of those who heard it or heard of it. Samuel did not wait for the people to come to him to hear him, but he sought them. He traveled throughout the country, organized popular assemblies, and announced to the crowds whatever the spirit of God prompted him to deliver. His prophetic utterances refreshed the people and inspired them with faith in God and in themselves. The people had found a leader whom they could follow even under the most trying circumstances. Still, Samuel alone could not have brought about this great change. Fortunately, he had a band of assistants in the Levites who had lived at Shiloh before the destruction of that sanctuary. Accustomed as they were to the service of the altar and the sanctuary, and as no other sanctuary had as yet been established to which they could attach themselves, they organized themselves into a guild and joined forces with Samuel.

Another circumstance that contributed towards the awakening of the people out of their lethargy was the fact that the tribes of Judah and Simeon shook off their isolation at this time, and joined forces with the rest of Israel. Throughout the period of Judges these two tribes led a nomadic life in the pasture lands and wildernesses of their territory; and the Jebusites who occupied the region between the mountains of Ephraim and of

Judah formed an effective barrier between them and their northern brethren. But the repeated onslaughts of the Philistines on the Israelites seems to have stirred the tribe of Judah to form a closer union with the other tribes, and, for the first time in the centuries since they entered the land, Jacob and Israel stood a reunited people. The shepherd tribe of Judah that preserved the patriarchial simplicity of life, with its love of freedom and independence, and was uncontaminated by the baneful influences of the Phoenician cults, acted as a rejuvenating force upon the other tribes of Israel.

This rejuvenation could not have taken place, however, without the powerful personality of Samuel. Assisted by the prophetic guilds of the Levites, he continued his activity with zeal and power for a number of years and became the acknowledged leader of the people. Though not a warrior, his inspiring enthusiasm enabled him to lead Israel to victory over the Philistines not far from the spot where, many years before, they had routed the Israelites and captured the Ark. This victory raised the courage of the Israelites, and enabled them to enjoy a decade of undisturbed peace which Samuel utilized to cement the tribal union still more firmly. He called the elders of Israel together in annual assembly, explained their duties to them, reminded them of the misfortunes that had befallen the people as a result of godlessness, intermingling with idolators and the imitation of their vices, and warned them against relapses.

The centre of his activity was Mizpah, in the territory of Benjamin, which became a centre of worship, likewise, and it was he who introduced the psalm of praise with musical accompaniment as an element of divine worship. Samuel himself, the ancestor of the Korachides that later became

famous as writers of psalms, was beyond doubt the first to compose psalms for use in connection with divine worship. His grandson Heman became famous in later times, along with Asaph and Jeduthun, as a psalmist and musician. The Levitical choirs and the singing of psalms added solemnity, refinement and impressiveness to the service, and lessened the importance attached to sacrifices. The priests of the house of Aaron did not relish this innovation, but Samuel paid little attention to them. As a matter of fact, these priests established another shrine at Nob, not far from Jerusalem, whither Ahitub, the grandson of Eli, had fled at the destruction of Shiloh, taking the priestly vestments with him. But Samuel ignored this city of priests completely.

With the advance of the years, however, many circumstances combined to disturb Samuel's equanimity. His sons were not respected by the people, and were accused of taking bribes; and there were no other capable men upon whom the mantle of leadership might fall. The bond of union which held the tribes together was getting weaker, since Samuel's advancing age prevented him from coming into as frequent contact with the elders as heretofore. Moreover, the enemies of Israel had become very powerful just then. The Philistines in Samuel's day had established a monarchy, or were forced to it by one of the rulers of the five Philistine cities. The new king was ambitious to extend his kingdom, and waged a successful war against the Phoenicians, capturing the city of Sidon. The Sidonians sought safety in their ships and erected a new city on a rock projecting far into the sea, which they called Tyre, or the Rock City. The departure of the Sidonians left the entire coast from Gaza to Sidon in the hands of the Philistines; it seemed easy to them to extend their

dominion inland, and they, therefore, began a new series of bloody wars with the Israelites. The Ammonites, east of the Jordan, who had been subdued by Jephtha, also rose again under a warlike king, Nahash, and made incursions into the tribes of Gad and half of Manasseh. These tribes sent messengers to Samuel to ask for help, and voiced a sentiment that shocked Samuel but met with general approval. They demanded a *King for Israel,* a king with authority to force united and energetic measures upon all the tribes, and to lead them to battle and to victory.

The very idea of kingship was abhorrent to Samuel. The ideals of the equality of each and every man before God and the Law, and of the complete independence of each clan under its own patriarchal chief had become part of his nature. Why should a whole people submit to the whims and caprices of one man? In a fervent appeal to the elders he arrainged the institution of kingship, showing that it must inevitably lead to the enslavement of the mass of the people. But the elders of the people insisted that only a king could deliver them from their troubles, a sentiment boisterously upheld by the representatives of the tribes east of the Jordan in this hour of their urgent need. The Philistines had become so bold that they no longer contented themselves with attacking the border cities only, but actually extended their dominion throughout the width of the country almost up to the Jordan. In some cities they went so far as to put tax-gatherers to collect tribute of cattle and corn. Under such circumstances, the desire for a king became louder and more insistent, and Samuel had to yield. The new form of government which was to turn the course of Israelitish history into a different direction had become a matter of necessity. Samuel saw to it, at least, that the new king

should be selected not from the haughty tribe of Ephraim, but from Benjamin, the least important of the tribes. The family of the new king, likewise, was an unimportant one; his father Kish was an honest, simple farmer. Saul, who was to be chosen, possessed the characteristically rustic bashfulness and shyness. This and other traits of Saul's character appeared as a strong pledge against the assumption of arrogance on the part of the first king of Israel. It was to be expected that he would obediently follow the advice of the prophet who had raised him from a low estate to the highest rung of power.

Saul was present with the clan of Kish at the place of assembly where the king was to be chosen, but when the lot fell upon him as the choice he could nowhere be found; he had hidden himself. When he was finally presented to the people, his strikingly handsome figure, for "he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards," made a favorable impression upon the assembled multitude. And when Samuel introduced him with the words: "Behold the man whom God had chosen as your king, there is none to equal him among all the people," the great majority of the multitude, carried away by the solemnity of the occasion and the handsome appearance of Saul, shouted with one voice: "Long live the king!" The prophet anointed Saul with consecrated oil which was to render the new king inviolate, and the elders rejoiced in the accomplishment of their inmost desire to have a king as a leader. Samuel embraced this opportunity to point out to the people the prerogatives of the king. This choice of a king was a decisive moment in the history of the Israelites; it determined their entire future. But in the midst of the general solemnity and rejoicing discordant voices were also heard. Some few discontented people,

probably Ephraimites who had hoped that the king would be chosen from their own tribe, expressed their disappointment contemptuously: "In what can this man help us!" While the rest of the elders were paying homage to the new king, and some of the more courageous even followed him to Gibeah to assist him in his undertaking against the Philistines, the discontented ones held aloof and refused to acknowledge him as their king.

His election to the kingship and the consciousness that his elevation was brought about by divine intervention elated Saul to such an extent that he determined to face the mighty foe at once, and to bring order out of the chaos existing in his own kingdom. The condition of the people was a desperate one, almost worse even than in the time of of the Judges. The victorious Philistines had deprived the Israelites of all weapons, bows, arrows, and swords, and left no smith in the land who might forge new weapons. Only the newly-chosen king had a sword, the symbol of kingship among all nations and in all times; though his election was most probably accomplished with the utmost secrecy that the Philistines might not learn of it. The Philistine governors lorded it with a high hand over the Israelites and suppressed the least sign of rebellion. Some Israelites were even compelled to fight with the Philistines against their own brethren and were treated with the utmost contempt by the enemy himself. Only a miracle could bring about salvation, and such a miracle was brought about by Saul, by his son, and his kinsmen.

Saul began the unequal struggle with the Philistines. He was supported by his eldest son, Jonathan, modest, unselfish, capable of the most loyal friendship, frank, rather pliable, but possessing death-defying courage; by his kinsman, Abner, a swordsman of unyielding determination, and by

other worthies of the tribe of Benjamin who were proud of the prominence given their tribe. Jonathan, at the command of Saul, precipitated matters by attacking and destroying a Philistine garrison. This declaration of war was announced by a blowing of horns throughout Benjamin. The brave men of the tribe trooped to Saul's standard, while the cowardly fled across the Jordan or hid themselves in caves, in clefts of the rocks, or in subterranean passages. The outcome of the conflict was awaited with anxiety. The Israelites were assembled at Gilgal, a point most distant from the land of the Philistines, where Samuel had promised to meet Saul, there to impart to him further instructions. The Philistines, meanwhile, were preparing themselves for a war of annihilation. Jonathan's attack threw them into a rage, though they were rather surprised than frightened at the apparently foolhardy attempt of the Israelites to attack them without any weapons. A large army, supported by cavalry, marched through the valleys of the mountains of Ephraim throughout the entire width of the country as far as Michmash. It was a momentous hour for Israel.

While the Philistines were gradually approaching, Saul, surrounded by his brave followers, remained inactive at Gilgal, awaiting with the tensest impatience the arrival of Samuel who was to deliver prophetic instructions to him, and to inspire the Israelitish warriors with courage. Still, day after day passed and Samuel did not arrive. But every hour was precious. To remain inactive longer was to defeat the purpose of the campaign. A number of Saul's followers had already departed, looking upon Samuel's absence as an ill omen. In his impatience Saul determined to go ahead without the prophet, and was already engaged in offering up the customary sacrifice, when Samuel ap-

peared! The prophet rebuked Saul harshly for his impatience, and left him unceremoniously. This was a hard blow for Saul who relied upon the prophet's support in his undertaking. With Samuel's departure, there was no longer any reason for Saul to remain at Gilgal. Saul had only six hundred men with him; and it was almost with despair that he contemplated the outcome of the struggle of such a weaponless handful with the well organized and well armed hosts of the enemy. What grieved Saul particularly was that Samuel, by abandoning him, had deprived him of the means that could have delivered instructions to him and the people in the name of God.

It was again Jonathan who decided the issue. Between Gaba, Saul's camp, and Michmash, the camp of the Philistines, hardly three miles apart, there was a pass, divided by steep, almost perpendicular precipices, narrowing eastward to a ravine hardly ten paces wide. As this ravine was considered impassable, it was only by circuitous marches that the Philistines and the Israelites could meet. But Jonathan, accompanied by his armor-bearer, undertook one day to climb, on hands and feet, the steep wall of rock leading to the side of Michmash. This undertaking was fraught with the greatest danger, for the least misstep meant death; but it was accomplished successfully.

The Philistines were rather surprised at seeing the two men on the top of the insurmountable height, but addressed them mockingly: "Behold, the Israelites are crawling out of the holes wherein they have been hiding. Come over to us, that we may make your acquaintance." As Jonathan and his companion had agreed before hand to regard such a challenge as an omen of success, they determined to make an attack, and began to shower rocks on the Philistines. Surprised at the sudden

assault from a point which they considered inaccessible, the Philistines, fearing that some supernatural power was attacking them, were seized with panic, and began to strike at each other and to run in wild flight. No sooner did Saul observe these signs of confusion than he and his six hundred followers swooped down upon the enemy and completed their discomfiture. The Israelites who had been impressed in the Philistine ranks to fight against their brethren, turned their weapons against their oppressors, and the inhabitants of the cities of the Mountains of Ephraim through which the Philistines fled also fell upon the fleeing enemy. Though worn and exhausted, Saul's increasing army pursued the Philistines over mountain and valley.

Meanwhile the tribes of Gilead, east of the Jordan, were being hard pressed by Nahash, King of the Ammonites, who besieged the stronghold of Jabesh. The people of Jabesh, unable to hold out much longer, were willing to surrender, but the condition imposed by Nahash was so inhuman and humiliating that the besieged begged for a truce that they might, meantime, send for help. Nahash was so sure of his ultimate capture of the city that he granted the truce.

As Saul was returning home one day from his field behind his team of oxen, he found the people in great excitement and some in tears. The messengers sent by the besieged of Jabesh-Gilead had arrived and told of the terrible fate that was awaiting the people of that city, unless they received speedy aid. Incensed at the reproach cast upon Israel by Nahash, Saul determined to bring the necessary aid. Bringing his regal authority into use for the first time, he ordered all Israel to arms against the Ammonites. Samuel, on his part, sanctioned this call, and declared his readiness to ac-

company the expedition. A considerable army gathered around Saul, crossed the Jordan, attacked the Ammonites on three sides, and scattered them to the winds. The city of Jabesh was saved, and the gratitude of its inhabitants made them loyal adherents of Saul and his house. On his return across the Jordan, Saul was received with enthusiastic joy. Samuel, who was present, called a great assembly of the people at Gilgal, anointed Saul a second time (about 1067 B. C. E.), and offered sacrifices. Saul was welcomed with the greatest acclaim and received the homage of the people. Samuel embraced this opportunity to remind the king and the people that the joy of victory must not lead them to arrogance, that the monarchy was a means and not the end; and he dwelt upon the mutual relations of king and people. Samuel's address proves the loftiness of his soul and his prophetic greatness.

The two great victories won by Saul, and the great assembly at Gilgal that offered him the homage of most of the tribes, not only strengthened his own position, but virtually assured the existence of the monarchy. No matter how highly Samuel praised and glorified the period of the Judges, the people felt that the King could protect them more effectively than the Judges ever could. They willingly paid their republican liberty as the price of unity and consequent strength.

The monarchy necessarily brought about some changes. Saul gathered a number of the bravest men about him, forming a sort of standing army, under the command of his cousin Abner. The king needed also both an official class, captains of a thousand and a hundred, advisers and friends who sat at his table, and an armed body of servants to carry out his commands and to be responsible to him alone. As a consequence, Gibeah, which had

been only a small town or a village, rose into importance and became the capital of the new kingdom.

Saul was at first very docile to the prophet. When Samuel ordered him in the name of God to begin a war of annihilation against the Amalekites, Saul was ready to obey at once. The Amalekites were bitter, hereditary enemies of the Israelites. Both in the wilderness and upon the entrance into Canaan they committed actrocities upon the Israelites, and always joined their enemies. In Saul's time, the tribe of Judah seems to have suffered a great deal at the hands of their king, Agag, who enjoyed the reputation of a great warrior and spread terror round about. The Amalekites, likewise, were reputed men of extraordinary valor. It was, therefore, no inconsiderable matter to undertake a war against them. But Saul did not hesitate a moment. He carried on the campaign with a great deal of skill and courage, succeeded in driving the Amalekites into an ambush, and destroyed them completely. He captured their capital, killed all the men, women and children, and took Agag prisoner. The Israelites found very rich booty in the camp of the enemies. Upon Samuel's order, all that treasure was to be destroyed, so that every vestige of Amalek might be wiped out. The warriors, however, would not give up the rich spoil. Saul, usually so firm, permitted the retention of the spoil, thereby violating the command of the prophet.

Saul led Agag in chains before him to grace his triumph, and his victory over the dreaded Amalekites intoxicated him to such an extent that he lost all his fromer modesty, and erected a monument in the oasis of Carmel as a memorial of this great event. Meanwhile, Samuel saw in a prophetic vision that Saul had disobeyed him, and he was commanded to repudiate him. This task was exceed-

ingly painful to him, and he spent the entire night in prayer hoping that he might be relieved of this unpleasant duty. He finally decided to meet Saul; but when he learned, on his way, that Saul had been carried away by his pride to the extent of erecting a monument to himself, he turned and went to Gilgal. Saul went to meet him there. The elders of Benjamin and of the neighboring tribes also assembled there to greet the conquering king; but they witnessed a scene there that boded ill for the future.

As though nothing had happened, Saul greeted the prophet with the words: "I have obeyed the command of the Lord." "What, then, is the bleating of the cattle which I hear?" asked Samuel harshly. "The people saved the best part of the herds in order to sacrifice them on the altar of Gilgal," replied Saul. The prophet could not suppress his displeasure at these words, and replied in a poetic outburst:

"Doth the Lord delight in sacrifices
And offerings as in obedience?
Behold! To obey is better than sacrifices
To harken than the fat of rams.
Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft
Stubbornness as idolatry and teraphim.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (I Sam. XV, 22-23.) As Samuel turned to go, Saul humbled at the words of the prophet, took hold of his mantle so firmly that it rent. "This is a sign," said Samuel, "that the Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine who is better than thou." Saul begged the prophet again: "Honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn

again with me, that I may worship the Lord, my God." Samuel finally yielded, and accompanied Saul to the altar, where he humbled himself before God. Samuel ordered to bring King Agag before him. Like a coward the Amalekite king wailed:

"O, how bitter is death!" to which Samuel replied:

"As thy sword hath made women childless,
So shall thy mother be childless among women."
—(Ibid. 33.)

and he ordered that Agag be killed.

The king and the prophet never met again after that scene at Gilgal. Saul's pride was broken; and the announcement that God had forsaken him, and had selected a better man than he, threw him into a melancholia which later on assumed a violent form. Reluctant as he had been to assume the kingship, he was just as reluctant now to abdicate it—and he knew his helplessness against the prophet. He determined to seek forgetfulness of his disappointment in the pursuits of war, since there were still enough enemies left on the borders of Israel to be conquered. He also tried to impress his personality upon Israel in another way. There was still living, in the very heart of the country, a number of Canaanite families and small tribes whom the Israelites were unable to dispossess, and who had led Israel astray after idoltry. Thinking that he would render a great service to Israel and especially to Israel's religion by destroying the heathen neighbors from the midst of the land, Saul undertook the extermination of the strangers, *i. e.*, non-Israelites. His first victims were the Gibeonites who had voluntarily submitted to the Israelites since the days of Joshua. Disregarding the oath of toleration and protection given them at that time,

Saul made an example of them so that only a few escaped. He also began to persecute the conjurers and necromancers who were connected with idolatry to a certain extent. While, on the one hand, Saul was endeavoring to win the favor of the people by zealously championing the national and religious cause of Israel, he tried, on the other hand, to create a feeling of respect for the monarchy by surrounding himself with truly royal pomp. He put a golden crown on his head; whoever approached him had to prostrate himself before him, and he even indulged in the royal luxury of polygamy.

In the midst of his campaigns against the external enemies, of his zeal to banish the foreign elements from within Israel, and of the pomp and circumstance with which he surrounded himself, Saul might have succeeded in forgetting the doom which the prophet had pronounced over him. But circumstances so shaped themselves that the prophet's fateful words stood before his eyes constantly in the shape of a handsome youth, a rival with whom he came in daily contact, and whose interests he himself helped to promote to a certain extent.

After many petty skirmishes, a serious war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines. Saul gathered a large army, and was facing the Philistines. As both sides were hesitating to take the first step, the Philistines proposed to settle the issue by single combat, and put the giant Goliath forward as their champion. Saul promised rich gifts, freedom from taxes and military duty, and even the hand of one of his daughters to any one who would accept the giant's challenge. But none of his soldiers came forward. However, as though by accident, a shepherd boy from Bethlehem, a village in the neighborhood of the camp, happened

to be present, and he it was who decided the issue. This shepherd of Bethlehem was destined directly and indirectly to bring about a revolution in the history both of Israel and of mankind. David, known then only to the villagers of Bethlehem, has since become a household name almost throughout the world.

After his quarrel with Saul, Samuel received the prophetic command to proceed to Bethlehem, and to choose and anoint one of Jesse's eight sons as the future king of Israel. Samuel betook himself to Bethlehem secretly, for fear of Saul's vengeance, and anointed David, the youngest son of Jesse, in the midst of his brothers. It is self evident that this simple but significant act was kept a profound secret by Jesse and his sons. Jesse did not belong to the very prominent families of Judah, and David, a handsome youth of eighteen, was as yet without worldly experience, having spent all his young life in the beautiful pasturages around Bethlehem. But in this youth there lay dormant native talents which, when awakened, were to raise him spiritually above his fellows, even as Saul rose above them bodily.

David was a poet and a musician first of all, and his native mountains must have re-echoed to many of his songs while he was tending his flocks. This poetic gift, however, did not turn him into a mere dreamer. When the war against the Philistines broke out, with the scene of action so near Bethlehem, David became very restive, and eagerly embraced the opportunity of visiting the camp when his father entrusted him with a mission to his brothers who were with Saul. Outraged at the insults hurled at the Israelites and their God by Goliath, David told the bystanders that he was ready to undertake the combat with the Philistine, until it reached Saul's ears that a youth had offered himself as champion. In astonishment mingled

with mockery, Saul permitted him to undertake the combat, offering him his own armor. This the youth declined.

The first stone out of his sling sent by his skilled hand struck the heavily-armed giant in the forehead, and threw him to the ground. David rushed upon his prostrate enemy, and, with his own sword, severed his head. The Philistines who watched the combat from the mountains acknowledged their defeat, and sought safety in flight, with the Israelites in hot pursuit. The youthful conquerer, holding the bleeding head of his enemy in his hand, was presented to Saul who was overjoyed at the victory, and as yet had not the least suspicion that this youth was to be his much-feared rival. Saul expressed his admiration of David openly, the impressionable Jonathan was fascinated by the young conquerer, and loved him with a love surpassing the love of woman, and David's fame spread throughout Israel. The youth, however, returned to Bethlehem as though nothing had happened, bringing with him, as a memorial of his brave act, the head of Goliath and his armor.

But David did not remain at home long. The shadows of gloom which began to depress Saul's spirits after his quarrel with Samuel, thickened more and more. He was ill-tempered, depressed and melancholy, and even showed signs of raving madness at times. "An evil spirit came upon the king." As only the playing of the harp had the power to soothe him, his faithful servants advised him to employ a skilled musician, and they remembered the son of Jesse. David thus came into Saul's court, and charmed the king both by his personality and by his musical talent. Whenever Saul fell into a mood of melancholia, David had only to touch the strings and the depression vanished. Saul was finally so captivated by David that he

loved him like a son, obtained Jesse's consent to retain him at court, and appointed him his armor-bearer in order to have him close at hand. David exerted the same fascination upon all who were near Saul's person. Jonathan loved him above all, and Michal, Saul's second daughter, cherished a secret love for David in her heart.

While at court, David learned the use of weapons, and soon distinguished himself in the petty skirmishes with the Philistines from which he usually returned victorious. Returning once after inflicting a severe loss upon the Philistines, he was hailed as a conqueror by the people, and the women and the maidens of the towns through which he passed received him with song, with tambourines and triangles, exclaiming: "Saul slew his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." The honors thus shown the young hero with so much enthusiasm and love finally opened Saul's eyes to recognize in David the much-dreaded rival, "the better one whom God had chosen as king over Israel," of whom Samuel had spoken. Saul was staggered at this discovery. "Me they give only thousands, but him ten thousands; they already raise him above me; what else does he lack but the kingdom?" Saul's love of David turned into hate, and filled him with rage.

Already on the day after David's triumphal return, Saul flew into a fury and hurled his spear at David who succeeded in evading it. The failure of his well-aimed blow convinced Saul that God himself was protecting his enemy, but he did not give up his attempts on David's life. He resorted to cunning. To all appearances, he distinguished David by appointing him commander of his chosen troops, selected him to lead expeditions of a serious nature, and was even compelled to give him his daughter Michal in marriage, much against his

David Displaying the Head of Goliath

By Doré

will. Both Michal and Jonathan embraced the cause of David. This embittered Saul still further, and he sought the life of David, secretly at first, then openly, to the extent of pursuing him with an armed force. David was declared an outlaw, but a number of daring men, discontented, adventurous fellows, joined him. Among these were his kinsmen, the sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai and Ashael. These formed the nucleus of the band of courageous warriors by whose help David finally ascended the throne. Gad, a prophet of Samuel's school, also joined him, and the last representative of the high priestly house of Eli was driven by Saul himself to seek shelter with David. Saul suspected the priests of Nob, descendants and kinsmen of Eli, of siding with David, and, in his fury, gave orders for their extermination. Abiathar, the sole survivor of the family, fled to David who received him with open arms.

Saul's hatred of his rival made him cruel and bloodthirsty. All the attempts of Jonathan to bring about a reconciliation between his father and his friend failed, and even increased the intensity of Saul's hatred. A portion of the people, realizing that Saul was in the wrong, assisted David secretly, and made it possible for him to frustrate Saul's secret plans for his capture.

Because of Saul's persecution and the roaming life which he was compelled to lead in consequence, David had no choice but to be on friendly relations with the enemies of his people, with the king of Moab, with Nahash, king of Ammon, and with the Philistine king Achish; and he, thereby, incurred the suspicion of being a traitor, so that Saul's hatred of him appeared justified. His connections with Achish appeared especially suspicious. This Philistine king had given him protection, and consigned the city of Ziklag to him on condition that

he and his six hundred men join the Philistine armies and fight with them against Israel. David evidently intended to evade this condition, or, if the worst came to the worst, to turn against his allies and go over to his own people. For the present, however, he was compelled to agree to the condition imposed by Achish. Led by David's duplicity to rely upon his assistance, Achish determined to undertake a decisive war against Israel. On account of his disease, Saul could no longer perform the feats of heroism which characterized him in the earlier days. David was turned against Saul, and the boldest and bravest of Israel's warriors were with David and the Philistines. Achish, therefore, gathered his entire army in order to strike a decisive blow at Israel.

How David could have succeeded in extricating himself from the embarrassing position in which he found himself is, of course, a matter of conjecture. He had to turn traitor either to Israel or to the Philistines. Luckily, the Philistine chiefs themselves came to his rescue. They suspected David's sincerity, and demanded that he be left behind. The king yielded, to David's secret joy; and David and his men returned to Ziklag.

Meanwhile, the large army of the Philistines set itself in motion. Saul, immediately upon receiving the news of the Philistines' march, assembled his army and went to meet the enemy in forced marches, and encamped at first at the foot of Mount Gilboa. He then made a circuit of the opposite mountain ridge, and encamped at the northwest foot of that mountain, near Endor.

Saul was dismayed at the sight of the great Philistine army, especially at their cavalry; his depression had deprived him of his courage. He felt himself forsaken by God, since he had neither priest nor prophet whom he might consult as to the out-

come of the war. In his perplexity, he sought out a witch at Endor, who had succeeded in evading his persecution and who plied her trade secretly. It was the irony of fate that he had to recourse to witchcraft who had himself endeavored to banish witchcraft from the land.

Saul began the battle with gloomy forebodings. The Israelites fought manfully all day. Overwhelmed in the plain by the Philistine horsemen and chariots, they retreated to Mount Gilboa, but they were completely routed. The loyal Jonathan fell together with his brothers. Saul, with only his armor bearer by his side, found himself surrounded by Philistine archers. To avoid capture, he threw himself on his sword, and he died the death of a king. His armor bearer also killed himself. The defeat was overwhelming. After plundering the dead, the Philistines cut off Saul's head and sent it as a trophy to the temple of Dagon, while his armor was preserved in a temple of Astarte as a memorial of their great victory over Israel. The headless bodies of Saul and his sons they exposed on the walls of Beth-shean. The inhabitants of the Plain of Jezreel and of the easterly upper Jordan fled across the Jordan, and the Philistines occupied their cities. Following up their victory, they occupied, likewise, all important cities south of Gilboa. The inhabitants of Saul's capital, Gibeah-Saul, fled in a panic. In her flight to the mountains, the nurse of Jonathan's five-year-old son, Mephibosheth, dropped the child, so that he became lame for life. The condition of Israel at the time of Saul's death was worse even than that at the time of his selection. The defeat was so thorough and so unexpected that no one even thought of resistance. Only the men of Jabesh-Gilead, out of gratitude to Saul for delivering them from the Ammonites, displayed some courage, by stealing across the

Jordan to Beth-shean at night, and removing the bodies of Saul and Jonathan which had been exposed on the walls. Reverently they brought the bodies of these heroes to their city, gave them an honored burial, and declared a week's mourning. The tribes west of the Jordan lacked similar courage or were not moved by similar gratitude to Saul who plunged the country into misfortune on account of his quarrel with David.

Such was the end of the king in whom the people had placed so much hope.

CHAPTER III

KING DAVID
(About 1055-1015 B. C. E.)

In the confusion following the death of Saul, David also seems to have been forgotten by the people. What was he doing while his native land was bleeding? To many peole his conduct seemed reprehensible. The thought that David was in alliance with the enemies of his people, was protecting their borders in a measure while they were engaged in spreading ruin and desolation in his native land, and was looking only after his own safety in such a critical moment, must have been painful to many of his former admirers. As a mater of fact, David had his hands full on his own account. On his return to Ziklag, after he was dismissed by the Philistine nobles, he found that city in ashes and the women and the children gone. The Amalekites, who had suffered at his hands in many a campaign against them, took advantage of David's absence, plundered and destroyed the city, and carried the women and children captive. In their sudden grief, David's men turned against him for a while. But David led them in hot pursuit after the Amalekites, learned the whereabouts of their camp from an Egyptian slave whom they had abandoned in

his sickness on the road, and fell upon them so unexpectedly and with such violence that only a few succeeded in escaping on their camels. David and his men returned to Ziklag with their recovered families, and began to rebuild the city. Out of the rich booty which he found in the Amalekite camp he sent gifts to the elders of Judah and to his friends in many cities from Beersheba to Hebron. His object in so doing was both to announce his victory and to attach these men to himself.

It was while David was engaged in rebuilding Ziklag that the news reached him of the calamity of Gilboa and of the death of Saul and his sons. His first impulse was that of deep sorrow at the tragic death of the king and at the loss of his dearly-beloved Jonathan. He instituted public mourning for their death and over the calamity that had befallen the people, and delivered a profoundly touching poetic elegy on that occasion. But, sincere as may have been his grief over the death of Saul, David determined to utilize this opportunity to his own advantage. The Philistine Ziklag had no attractions for him any longer; he yearned to go back among his own, and he selected as his residence the city of Hebron, the seat of Judah's nobility, where his six hundred followers likewise settled. The elders of Judah held aloof from David at first. They could not forget his alliance with the Philistines. But after he had established himself firmly in Hebron, he won the confidence of the elders to such an extent that they elected him king over the tribe of Judah. He put himself at once in communication with the tribes east of the Jordan in the hope of winning them over to his side. The tribes west of the Jordan were still in the power of the Philistines; and David himself was still too much entangled with his allies to dare offend them in any way.

Achish allowed David to assume the kingship of Judah, and to lead marauding expeditions against the border tribes of the wilderness, receiving a part of the booty as tribute. Beyond that David durst not go. Joab, a daring general with an active mind, was rather restive under these restrictions. However, the liberation of the country from the Philistine yoke was accomplished by Abner, the commander-in-chief of Saul's army, who survived the catastrophe of Gilboa. Escaping to the east of the Jordan beyond the reach of the Philistines, and in a territory loyal to the house of Saul, Abner established his headquarters at Mahanaim, and succeeded in inducing the tribes of the vicinity to elect Ish-bosheth, Saul's only surviving son, as Saul's successor. With a large army gathered from the east-Jordanic tribes and from the loyal Benjaminites, Abner began the struggle with the Philistines, and succeeded in liberating the entire country after a continuous warfare of four or five years' duration (1055-1051). The liberated tribes embraced enthusiastically the cause of Saul's son, out of gratitude to Abner who not only regained their independence but also welded the ten tribes into a solid, united kingdom.

The joy of Abner's great victory was marred, however, by the separation of the tribe of Judah into an independent kingdom. A union of the two reigning houses was out of the question. Not only were the rival kings themselves opposed to it, since one or the other would have to forfeit his royal dignity under such an arrangement, but their respective partisans, and, above all, the jealousy between Joab and Abner, equally able and energetic men both, prevented such a possibility. The Judahns laid stress upon the fact that David was not only a courageous warrior but also a divinely appointed king, since he had been anointed

by the prophet Samuel, whereas Ish-bosheth seemed to possess no martial spirit, and was holding his dignity only by the grace of Abner. A civil war broke out in consequence between the house of Saul and the house of David which continued for two years (1051-1049).

While this conflict was going on, a sudden estrangement occurred between Abner and Ish-bosheth which changed the course of events completely. Abner desired for himself one of Saul's concubines, the beautiful Rizpah, who lived at Mahanaim with her two sons. Though Abner was indispensable to Ish-bosheth, the king regarded the taking of the concubine by Abner as an attempt upon the kingship, and felt himself impelled to rebuke Abner sharply. Abner regarded this rebuke as an act of ingratitude on the part of the royal figure-head, and felt himself justified in opening a clandestine correspondence with David with the view of turning over the allegiance of the ten tribes to him. In return for his services, Abner very likely demanded his appointment as commander-in-chief over the armies of all Israel. David received the overtures with joy, and demanded, as an earnest of their compact, the return of his beloved Michal whom Saul had given in marriage to the Benjaminite Paltiel. Ish-bosheth himself acknowledged the justice of this demand, and granted it. Under the plea of carrying out the king's command, Abner absented himself from Mahanaim, proceeded to the territory of Benjamin and took Michal away from Paltiel who followed her some distance "going and weeping," and sent her to David. But Abner utilized his leave of absence also for the purpose of secretly gaining adherents for David; and there were many Israelites, even among the Benjaminites, who desired, in their hearts, to put an end to the civil war in favor of David. Abner repaired secretly

to Hebron with twenty trusted friends, and had a personal interview with David as to the best means of bringing about the revolution in his favor. David, knowing the jealous and suspicious nature of Joab and his brothers, found the means of sending them away on some expedition during Abner's presence in Hebron. Joab, however, returned immediately upon Abner's departure from Hebron, and learned the astounding news that the erstwhile enemy of David had been received graciously and had been allowed to depart in peace. The king was having secret dealings behind his back, and he was to be the victim! Joab determined to act at once. He sent messengers to recall Abner in the name of David. Abner returned. Joab and Abishai lay in wait for him at the gate of Hebron, and the unsuspecting Abner, pierced with their swords, fell dead at their feet.

The death of Abner, the only man who was in a position to bring about a peaceful revolution, and who was foully murdered on the very eve of its accomplishment, shocked David deeply. To avert any suspicion of treachery from himself, David ordered an imposing funeral procession for the fallen hero, followed the bier with all his courtiers, and expressed his sorrow, amidst tears, in an elegy, the opening lines of which are still preserved:

"O, that Abner had to die as the worthless dieth!
Thy hands were not bound,
Thy feet were not put into fetters,
As one falleth before men of wickedness
Art thou fallen!"

—(II Sam. III, 33-34).

The tone of this elegy convinced everyone of the sincerity of David's grief, and made a deep impression upon the multitude. But David was

afraid to punish the sons of Zeruiah or even to upbraid them; they were too indispensable to him. Only among his confidants he complained: "Know ye not that a prince and a great man hath fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day yet weak, and just anointed king: and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too strong for me; may the Lord pay the doer of evil according to his wickedness." (Ibid. 38-9).

The news of Abner's treacherous murder crushed Ish-bosheth completely. He knew nothing of Abner's intended treason, but he felt that with Abner's death the very prop had been removed from under his throne. His own death followed soon after. Two Benjaminite brothers, to gain the favor of David, murdered Ish-bosheth while he lay asleep, and brought his head to David in the expectation of a high reward. Furious at the outrage, David made short shift of the scoundrels.

The death of Ish-bosheth removed all obstacles from David's path. Many recalled the heroic deeds he had perfomed under Saul; others had already been won over by Abner; and even those who disliked his connections with the Philistines felt that there was no other choice. Accordingly, the elders came to Hebron and swore allegiance to him, though some of the Benjaminites did so rather sullenly. David's ambition was at last realized. The priests and the prophets were all on his side, too. Abiathar, a descendant of Eli, had shared many of his trials with him; and the prophets Gad and Nathan were his hearty supporters. Within the country itself David's path was smooth before him, but many external obstacles had to be overcome before he could reign as an independent king.

David realized that he would have to break with the Philistines, if he desired to be independent and regain the full confidence of the people. For the

City of Hebron

present, however, being unequal to the task, he turned his attentions nearer home. The possession of Mount Zion, the Jebusite enclave in the midst of Benjamin, which was inaccessible on three sides, and especially on the southwest side on account of its nearly steep, rocky wall which rose abruptly from the gorge, would be of great advantage to him when it came to open warfare with the Philistines. David offered to buy this mountain fastness from the Jebusites. These, however, scorned his offer, and defied him to take the mountain by force; and David determined upon its conquest. With marvelous courage Joab and his men scaled the steep southwest wall of Mount Zion, and succeeded in capturing it. The Jebusites sued for peace, and David permitted them to retain possession of the eastern part of the city on Mount Moriah. He moved his residence from Hebron into the conquered city, and renamed it Jerusalem (the meaning of which is unknown). The part of the city which he occupied himself he named the City of David, and the part occupied by his bravest troops was called the House of Heroes.

This was the beginning of the city, styled the Holy City for thousands of years since; and its selection as the capital was a happy one, under the circumstance. Shechem, located in the very centre of Israel, and in a fertile region, might have served better for the purpose; but the haughty, jealous Ephraimities were not particularly well disposed towards a king who belonged to the semi-barbaric tribe of Judah. David preferred to be nearer his own tribe on whose help he could rely in case of a rebellion of the other tribes; and Jerusalem, on the border line between Judah and Benjamin, offered him the needed proximity. While they could not compare in fertility with the region around Shechem, the environs of the new capital were not

unfertile. The perennial brooks flowing in the valleys, those of Siloam and En-rogel on the southwest, and of Gihon on the west, could supply the city and the fields with water in case of a scarcity of rain. Jerusalem is surrounded on three sides by a range of hills which adds strength and beauty to the city. In the east, there is a high hill, the Mount of Olives, named after the olive forest. In the south, a pretty ravine expands eastward; it is the all too famous valley of Hinnom (or Ge-Hinnom), which was named after a person or family by that name, and later became the appellation for Hell (Gehenna). In the west, the elevation is lower, and can hardly be called a hill. In the north, the hill slopes down to a gentle plain. Because of these hills and valleys Jerusalem is protected on three sides as though by natural walls and ditches. Within Jerusalem, in the elevation between the three valleys in the east, south, and west, several hills rise from the plain: Mount Zion, the highest, in the west; a lower one in the north; and opposite it Mount Moriah, with its southern extension, called Ophel (Ophla). Though much lower than Mount Zion, Mount Moriah was to surpass it and the highest mountains of the earth in significance.

The Philistines looked on in silence at the selection of David to the kingship of all Israel, though they realized that such a step meant the ultimate breaking of the alliance between them and David. But when David conquered Jerusalem and took up his residence there, they decided to strike at once, before he could find time to gather a large army. Accordingly, a large Philistine army approached Jerusalem. Whether David was taken by surprise, or whether he wished to avoid a battle in front of his capital, he retreated southward to Adullam. The Philistines took up their headquarters at Bethlehem, David's native city, whence they sent out

raiding parties in the tribe of Judah. David hesitated to attack the Philistines; his army was probably weak, or he may have been awaiting reinforcements. To test the mettle of his men, he expressed a desire one day for a drink of water from a cistern near Bethlehem which was in the possession of the Philistines. Three heroes, Jashobeam, Eleazar and Shama, started at once, broke through the Philistine lines, drew the water from the cistern, and brought it to David at Adullam. David did not care to drink the water since it was obtained at the risk of the heroes' life; but with such an example of daring and devotion before him he hesitated no longer, fell upon the Philistine army, and won a decisive victory at Baal-perazim. The Philistines, however, would not acknowledge their defeat, and made repeated attacks, once in the Valley of Rephaim, another time at Ephes-dammim. But they were repulsed in each instance.

David realized that the Philistines must be made harmless if the Israelites were to enjoy peace. He therefore took the offensive, and attacked the City of Gath, the then capital of Philistia, situated nearest to Judah. The Philistines, of course, offered a stout resistance, and it came to many a bloody conflict in which David's heroes had the opportunity of distinguishing themselves. The Philistines often proposed single combats, and offered as their champions the remnants of the Rephaitic giants. Thirty-seven of David's warriors embraced these opportunities eagerly, and performed feats of strength and heroism. The Philistines were finally compelled to surrender their capital, and their strength was broken for all time. Peace was now assured, since the Israelites had no other enemies. David did not follow up the conquest. Even the City of Gath itself he seems to have returned to the Philistine king.

David's victory over the Philistines gained for him the respect not only of his own people, but of the neighboring nations as well. Hiram, King of Tyre, offered to make an alliance with him, and to furnish him cedars and other building material with which to beautify Jerusalem. Hiram was particularly anxious for such an alliance since it would insure a safe conduct for the Phoenician caravans on their way to Egypt through the highways of Israel. David gladly accepted this offer. With the building material obtained from Phoenicia, David beautified the city and fortified it on the north side which was more exposed. As Mount Zion, or the City of David, was becoing too small for its ever-growing population, David added to the city the lower hill north of Zion which received the name of Millo (enclosure). Mount Moriah, with its slope Ophel, was left to the Jebusites and formed, as yet, no part of Jerusalem. David had also a palace built for himself out of cedars brought from Lebanon, and endeavored, likewise, to make Jerusalem the centre of the religious activity of the people. With this object in view, he erected a magnificent tabernacle in the City of David and placed therein the Ark of the Covenant which had remained at Kirjath-jearim since its return by the Philistines. The king was so overjoyed on that occasion that he forgot his dignity and sang and danced before the Ark in the presence of all the people. His wife, Michal, reprimanded him for his undignified conduct; David replied angrily, and an estrangement between them followed.

On account of the presence of the Ark in its midst, the new city of Jerusalem became a holy city, as Shiloh had been in the days of Eli, and a number of priests attached themselves to the service of the new shrine. As a matter of course, David appointed as high priest the faithful Abi-

JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

athar, who had shared his hardships with him in the days of Saul. To avoid friction, David permitted Zadok, the high priest of Gibeon, appointed by Saul after the massacre of Nob, to continue in office; and thus two high priests officiated at the same time, Abiathar at Jerusalem, and Zadok at Gibeon. A poet and a musician himself, David naturally elaborated the psalm and musical service introduced by Samuel, and this became the foundation of divine worship for all time. At a time when the art of poetry had hardly been born among the other nations of the earth, it already formed an essential element in the divine worship of Israel.

With the new sanctuary firmly established, David concentrated his efforts upon the organization of an equitable system of government. He himself acted as judge, listened to complaints, settled disputes with perfect impartiality, and his throne became the seat not only of authority, but also of justice and equity. David became an ideal king, and the city of Jerusalem an ideal city, the home of pure religion and of impartial justice. As a result, David regained the popularity of his younger days, and loyalty took the place of force. He also instituted some changes in the internal affairs of the country. In case of war, each tribe was to contribute its quota of fighting men from the age of twenty and upwards. This national army was under the command of Joab. In addition, David maintained mercenary troops composed of heathen adventurers, the Cherethites from Chretha which belonged to the Philistines, and the Pelethites whose origin is unknown.* Their commander was Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, one of David's most heroic soldiers. Ahithophel of Giloh,

* Gesenius translates Krethi and Plethi "executioners and couriers, or perhaps Cretans and Philistines."

a man of extraordinary acumen, was David's chief adviser or prime minister.

Once David was put to a very severe test. There was a famine in the land which lasted for two years. The people turned to the king for advice, since they regarded it as an indication of divine displeasure at some undiscovered and unpunished crime. David consulted Abiathar, and the oracle informed him: "On account of Saul and his bloody persecution of the Gibeonites." David brought the Gibeonites to Jerusalem and asked them what atonement they desired. The Gibeonites would be satisfied with nothing short of the lives of Saul's descendants. This demand seemed just according to the standard of those days, since Saul had massacred their kinsmen without provocation, and in violation of a solemn oath. Should David spare the descendants of Saul, he would incur the ill-will of the people who regarded such expiation as the only means of removing the divine curse from the land. Should he grant the demand, he would lay himself open to the suspicion that it was revenge or some other selfish motive on his part that led to the destruction of Saul's family. With a heavy heart, David had to accede to the demands of the Gibeonites. Two of Saul's sons by his concubine Rizpah, and the son of his daughter Merab, were delivered to the Gibeonites who hanged them on poles in Gibeah-Saul, the city wherein their father had been crowned. But David succeeded in saving the life of Mephi-bosheth, the son of his friend Jonathan, whom he received in his own house and treated like a son. Nevertheless, the Benjaminites complained secretly that David himself had destroyed the house of Saul, and had saved the cripple Mephi-bosheth only because he was harmless as a possible rival. They showed their resentment when the opportunity presented itself.

In the course of the twenty years since his accession to the throne, David constantly engaged in warfare with neighboring and distant nations. He first led a war of retaliation against the Moabites whom he conquered and treated with unusual cruelty, and reduced the Land of Moab to a state of subjection. The war with the Ammonites was caused by the insults they offered to his ambassadors. As the Ammonites called to their assistance the Arameans who occupied an extensive territory from the north of the Lebanon and Damascus to the Euphrates, David had to fight both nations, but his armies gained surprising victories. David placed governors in each conquered territory, and even the ancient city of Damascus fell into his hands. As a result of these remarkable victories, the fame of David and his army spread far and wide. Foreigners and native Canaanites joined his ranks voluntarily. His kingdom, enclosed between Dan and Beer-Sheba when he became king over all Israel, now extended from the River of Egypt and Gaza to the Euphrates. The conquered nations were compelled to offer him annual gifts of homage, pay tribute, and possibly also furnish bondsmen for public works and other hard labor. But all his great victories did not turn David's head. Strong and firm in protecting the honor and safety of his people, he remained humble and modest. He did not, like Saul, erect memorials to his victories, but rather, like his great general Joab, he felt that it was God alone who gave him these victories.

Two closely related convictions of far-reaching importance for the future sank into the consciousness of the people as a result of these victories. The one was that victory or defeat was in the hands of God alone, and the other that God will always lead the armies of Israel to victory whenever they were fighting for the glory of His name or in de-

fense of His people. As a result of this conviction, the God of Israel was designated the "Lord of the Armies of Israel" (Yahveh Zebaoth). Before each war the Lord Zabaoth was invoked, and the armies of Israel went forth to battle with the confidence that they would never be defeated. This confidence wrought miracles in the course of time.

But the happiness of states as of individuals is rarely of long duration. David committed a crime which not only made him lose his joy and his peace of mind, but also shook the very foundation of the kingdom which he had erected with so much effort. Upon his return home from the Aramean victories to recuperate, while Joab and his brave troops were besieging the capital of the Ammonites, David, standing upon the roof of his palace, noticed a beautiful woman. Upon inquiry, he learned that she was Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his most devoted heroes, who was then with Joab. Carried away by his passion, David sent for her, and she dared not resist. Upon learning that his relations with Bath-sheba were not without consequences, and finding no expedient by which he could save his honor, David gave Joab the hint to put Uriah in such a position of danger on the battlefield from which he could not possibly escape. Joab obeyed, and Uriah fell dead, pierced by an arrow. After her period of mourning was over, David took Bath-sheba to his palace as his wife. She gave birth to a son who died in infancy.

In any other country such a caprice on the part of the king would have created little or no comment. All that the people knew was that Uriah had fallen in battle, that David had married his widow, and that she gave birth to a child not long after the death of her husband. In all this there was nothing suspicious. But there was, in Israel, an all penetrating eye and a conscience that was not afraid to

denounce crime, even though the criminal was the king himself. That eye and that conscience was the prophet. One day the prophet Nathan came to David and told him a parable of a possessor of many flocks who robbed a poor man of his only lamb. David was indignant, and declared that the rich robber deserved death. Calmly the prophet pointed at David: "Thou art the man!" David confessed his guilt, humbled himself in sincere repentance and prayer before God, and was forgiven. But though God forgave, men would not forget. Bath-sheba was the daughter of Eliam, one of David's heroic warriors, and a granddaughter of his prime-minister Ahithophel. The grandfather never forgave David for dishonoring his granddaughter and, though he held his peace, he was nourishing his hatred and was only waiting for the opportunity to wreak his vengeance upon the king. David did everything in his power to appease him. He raised Bath-sheba to the dignity of the First Queen, and promised solemnly to appoint her son Solomon his heir and successor. But Ahithophel was relentless.

From that time the palace of David became the house of intrigues and jealousies, and some disgraceful scandals took place there that embittered David's last years. His eldest son, Ammon, who regarded himself the heir apparent, committed a dastardly assault on his step-sister, Tamar, while he was feigning sickness in his room one day, and then threw her out of his chambers. Her brother, Absalom, on learning of the outrage, calmed his sister, asked her to be silent about it, but swore vengeance. David, too, heard of the outrage, but was too indulgent with his sons. Absalom disguised his hatred, said nothing to Amnon and thus threw him off his guard. One day, on the occasion of the shearing of the sheep on his estate near Jerusalem,

he invited all the king's sons to the feast. During the banquet he gave his servants the prearranged signal, and Amnon fell, murdered. Absalom fled to his grandfather, the king of Geshur, on the southwest border of Judah. David felt extremely outraged at the fratricide, and was for bringing Absalom back by force to punish him. Joab, who was in favor of Absalom's succession and against Solomon, advised against it, as did Ahithophel who hoped to make use of Absalom as an instrument of his vengeance. Joab engaged a wise and eloquent woman of Tekoa, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and, upon his instructions, she appeared before David in mourning garb and cried for help. When he inquired the cause of her complaint she told him a parable which brought home to David the inconsistency of killing one son to avenge the murder of another son. David saw the point clearly; and when the woman of Tekoa confessed that she acted in behalf of Joab, David sent for him and gave him the permission for Absalom's return, on condition that he be confined to his own house and that he does not appear before his father. At the expiration of two years, David became reconciled with his son at the instance of Joab. Seven years had already passed since the murder of Amnon.

In the isolation of his banishment, Absalom determined upon the overthrow of his father, and brooded over the plans of its execution. He put himself in secret communication with the shrewd Ahithophel who hoped, by means of Absalom, to wreak his vengeance upon David. Upon his reconciliation with his father, Absalom represented himself as the heir to the throne, and assumed a royal style. In his thirties, in the full vigor of manhood, his extremely handsome appearance and his beautiful hair falling to his shoulders made a pleasing impression upon all with whom he came in con-

tact. He was only awaiting the favorable moment to rise against his father, and the opportunity presented itself ere long.

In the last decade of his reign, David was busy with preparations for an extensive war which demanded a large army. He had already acquired six hundred Gittite mercenaries under the command of Ittai, an extremely great admirer and devoted follower of the heroic king. David ordered Joab to take a census of all men from the age of twenty and upwards who were capable of bearing arms. If the traditional figures be correct, it would appear that there were a million men in the country liable to military service out of a population of four million. It turned out, however, that the taking of the census was a great blunder. It created an extraordinary dissatisfaction among the people both because it portended a long war, and also because, according to the belief of those days, such a census would lead to fatal results. When a fearful epidemic broke out soon after that raged most furiously at Jerusalem on account of its larger population, many people ascribed it to the census. At the sight of the heaps of the dead, or, in biblical phraseology, of "the angel of destruction," David consulted the prophet Gad, who advised him that the erection of an altar on Mount Moriah, which had escaped the epidemic, would stop the plague at once. David proceeded thither immediately, obtained the willing consent of Araunah, the chief of the Jebusites, to acquire the hill by purchase, and erected an altar upon which he offered sacrifices. The plague is said to have ceased immediately. Henceforth Mount Moriah became an exceedingly sacred place. But though the plague ceased, the people ascribed the havoc it had wrought to some fault of David, and became very restive. Ahithophel advised Absalom to utilize the general dissat-

isfaction for his own purposes. He worked out a plan which could not fail.

On some pretext or another, Absalom and Ahithophel obtained the permission of the unsuspecting David to go to Hebron. The elders of Israel who had been won over to Absalom were already there. Ahithophel, whose opinion carried great weight, declared himself openly for Absalom; the standard of rebellion was raised and Absalom was hailed as king. The Benjaminites, who had lost prestige since the ascension of David, the ever sulky Ehpraimites, and all the malcontents who hoped to utilize the new reign of the weakling Absalom for their own advantage, acclaimed the rebel. Representatives came from all the tribes to pay their homage to the new king.

David learned of the conspiracy with the keenest grief. To avoid a civil war to which Joab urged him, and to spare the city of Jerusalem, David decided to leave his capital at once and to seek safety in flight. In this hour of despair, David found some comfort in the fact that he still had a large number of loyal friends, for Joab, his brother Abishai, with a large part of their heroic troops, as well as his mercenaries, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and the six hundred Gittites under Ittai, did not desert him. Amidst the loud wailing of the people of Jerusalem, David and his men left the city through the valley of Kidron and over the Mount of Olives, and turned to the wilderness. The two high priests, Zadok and Abiathar, desired to join him and bring the Ark with them; but, realizing that they might be of greater service to him in Jerusalem, he persuaded them to return. Hushai of Erech, a devoted friend of David's and as shrewd an adviser as Ahithophel, also wished to follow him. For fear that the hardships of the flight would prove fatal to Hushai on account of his age, and in the hope

that he might counteract Ahithophel's ingenious schemes, David persuaded him, too, to return to Jerusalem.

In the first city, through which David passed in his flight, Bahurim in Benjamin, he was met with jeers and insults. Shimei, a Benjaminite, threw stones at him and cursed him: "Get out, thou wretch and man of blood! May God destroy thee as thou hast destroyed the house of Saul whose crown thou hast robbed." Crushed at this reception, David arrived, exhausted, in the neighborhood of Jericho where he and his men encamped for a while.

Meanwhile, Absalom arrived at Jerusalem and took possession of the city. To render reconciliation with his father impossible, Ahithophel advised him to dishonor the ten concubines whom David had left behind in Jerusalem, and the unnatural son acted upon this advice. Ahithophel, of course, was intent solely upon his revenge on David, and minded not in the least that the outrage which he induced Absalom to commit might render the new king odious in the eyes of the people. But when it came to a discussion as to the best course to follow under the circumstances, Ahithophel advised shrewdly that Absalom with his large army pursue David at once, surprise him that very night, scatter his few followers, then capture and kill him. With David out of the way, the kingdom would of necessity fall into the hands of Absalom. This scheme, however, was frustrated by Hushai, David's loyal friend, who feigned allegiance to Absalom and succeeded in gaining his confidence. Hushai argued that, in their present state of despair, David's men would fight like lions, and Absalom would suffer a defeat from which he could not possibly recover. His advice was, therefore, that Absalom postpone the attack upon David until he could gather a still

larger army. This plan was adopted. Hushai immediately sent word to David of this decision through Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of the two high priests who remained in Jerusalem. Ahithophel, realizing that Hushai's plan would inevitably lead to Absalom's destruction and to his own undoing in consequence, hurried home to Giloh, and there committed suicide. This was a serious blow to Absalom's cause, since he had no able man among his adherents to take Ahithophel's place. His general, Amasa, was a man of small capacity. Before he set his army in motion, David had already gained an advantage. He crossed the Jordan to Mahanaim where he met with a loyal reception. All the tribes east of the Jordan put themselves at his disposal; and two men of Gilead vied with each other in providing the unfortunate king and his men with all their necessities.

Absalom finally crossed the Jordan, approached Mahanaim, and took up his position in the neighboring woods. His men, though far outnumbering David's, seemed to lack organization, and had no definite plan of action. David, on the contrary, divided his followers into three divisions under the command of the able veterans, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. Knowing David's fondness for Absalom in spite of his unnatural conduct towards his father, these generals insisted that David should not go with them in person. The struggle that followed was a bloody one. The unorganized followers of Absalom were no match for David's well-disciplined troops, and "the forest devoured more than the sword." Twenty thousand men are said to have perished. The wood of Rephaim proved fatal to Absalom, too. His long hair, of which he was so vain, caught in the branch of a large oak, his mule passed from under him, and he remained suspended in mid air. Joab, who was told of it, pierced him

with three darts. The struggle was over; the rebels fled in all directions.

David was prostrated at the news of Absalom's death. He wept aloud, crying repeatedly: "O Absalom, my son, my son! Would that I had died in thy stead!" The depth of a father's heart is unfathomable. David may have regarded Absalom as the dupe of Ahithophel's machinations. At any rate, his grief was so deep that he denied himself to every one, and gave himself up to mourning. It was only Joab's threat that all his loyal soldiers would leave him that very night unless he showed himself to the people that induced David to come out of his retreat. Absalom's body was buried in the wood of Rephaim and a mound of stones was placed upon it. The only trace left of Absalom was a beautiful mausoleum, which he had erected to himself during his short reign, called the Monument of Absalom, in the King's Valley, near Jerusalem.

David did not care to return to Jerusalem before the tribes had sworn allegiance to him again. The northern tribes showed such inclination first, and urged their elders to offer David their homage. But the tribe of Judah, David's own tribe, held aloof. David ascribed that aloofness to the opposition of Amasa, Absalom's general, whose influence among the tribesmen of Judah was great and who had little cause to expect David's favor. To win Amasa over to his side, David secretly offered him immunity, and promised to promote him to the office of commander-in-chief of his army. Thereupon, the Judahns sent an embassy to David with a formal invitation to return to Jerusalem.

Followed by his faithful friends and admirers, David recrossed the Jordan to Gilgal where the representatives of the tribes had assembled to offer him their allegiance. These were rather surprised

at seeing the Judahn embassy already with David. They had expected the Judahns to meet them at Gilgal, and to receive the king there in common with the other tribes, and they ascribed the zeal of the Judahns to an effort on their part to gain the king's favor to the disadvantage of the rest of Israel. The elders of Israel expressed their dissatisfaction in the presence of David. The Judahns resented the imputation. Recriminations followed. As David seemed to side with the Judahns, Sheba, of the family of Bichri, a Benjaminite, took advantage of the confusion to raise the standard of rebellion, and exclaimed: "We have no portion in David, and no lot in the son of Jesse. To thy tents, O Israel." The elders of the northern tribes followed Sheba. The Judahns accompanied David to Jerusalem, but the joy of the return was mingled with sorrow at the thought of the new disruption, of another civil war. In this plight David took a step which, in the light of subsequent events, might be taken either as one of shrewdness or as one of thoughtlessness. Since the death of Absalom, David looked upon Joab with disfavor, and determined to deprive him of the command of the army. Moreover, he not only wished to keep his promise to Amasa to appoint him to that office, but he realized how necessary it was to humor that influential man, now that he had only the tribe of Judah to depend upon. Accordingly, David ordered Amasa to gather the army of Judah within three days, and lead it against the rebels. The three days passed and Amasa did not appear. David became uneasy. Did Amasa join the rebellion? Promptness was necessary in order to leave Sheba no time to take possession of fortified cities. David had to turn again to the sons of Zeruiah of whose loyalty and ability he had many a proof. Still, David did not appoint Ioab to the chief command, but chose his

brother Abishai. In spite of that, Joab joined or rather led the army. Arriving at Gibeon, he came face to face with Amasa, and one stroke of Joab's sword sufficed to lay him low. The faithful sons of Zeruiah hurried to meet Sheba without pause. The Judahns whom Amasa had assembled joined them, and they found faithful adherents of David in every city. Sheba with but few followers took refuge in the fortress of Abel, and others of his adherents took possession of Dan, about three miles eastward, at the foot of Hermon. Joab laid siege to Abel and was about to destroy it, when a wise woman parleyed with him from the wall and promised him the head of Sheba if he would promise to raise the siege. Joab agreed. Both promises were kept, and Joab returned to Jerusalem victorious once more. Against his will David had to reappoint him commander-in-chief.

David returned to his capital, purified by his sufferings and repentant. He abandoned the plans he had made for the prosecution of an extensive war, and sought solace in his religion. It was his ambition to erect a magnificent temple to the God of Israel who had delivered him out of so many vicissitudes. But even in this he was disappointed. The prophet Nathan informed him that a man who had shed so much blood as he did was not the man to erect a sanctuary to God. At the same time, David felt comforted by the prophet's assurance that his son was destined to build the temple, and that his descendants would occuy his throne for many ages if they would walk in God's ways. However, though he abandoned his determination to build the temple, he continued to make preparations for its erection. A portion of the booty which he acquired from the conquered nations, he dedicated to the sanctuary. He is said to have invented many musical instruments which were later introduced

into the temple service. It is certain that he fixed the form of divine worship.

The many trials and vicissitudes through which David passed deprived him of his strength before he was seventy, and Adonijah, his fourth son, took advantage of his father's feebleness to acquire the succession for himself. He did not intend to rebel against his father as Absalom did; he only wanted to be acknowledged as David's successor by the influential element of the people. His ambition was furthered by Joab, as well as by the high priest Abiathar who seems to have lost David's favor. The indulgent David allowed Adonijah, who was as handsome and as vain as Absalom, to live in royal fashion, and thus tacitly admitted his claims to the succession. One day Adonijah invited his confederates and all the king's sons, with the exception of Solomon, to a banquet at the well of Rogel, southeast of Jerusalem, and was proclaimed king there.

But as soon as the news of the occurrence reached Jerusalem, Nathan the prophet hurried to Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother, and arranged a plan of action to frustrate Adonijah's ambition. Nathan knew of David's secret oath to Bath-sheba in behalf of Solomon's succession, and he would not permit the violation of the oath. Bath-sheba went to the king, reminded him of his oath, and called his attention to her apprehension that, in the event of Adonijah's ascension to the throne, her marriage with David would be branded as an infamy, and she and her son would be the victims. At that moment Nathan entered, and confirmed her pleas. David, therefore, decided to act at once in order to keep his oath. He summoned all his courtiers who had taken no part in Adonijah's conspiracy, and commended Solomon to them as his successor, and asked their allegiances to the new king. Accompanied by the Cherethites and Pelethites, by the courtiers and

a great concourse of people, Solomon was led in royal state to the valley of Gihon, west of the city, was there anointed with holy oil by the high priest Zadok and by Nathan, and far and wide rang the acclamation of the people: "Long live King Solomon!" Adonijah gave up his pretensions as soon as he heard the news. He fled to the Ark of Zion to claim the protection of the sanctuary. Solomon, who assumed the reins of government immediately, assured his brother that nothing would happen to him if he behaved properly. Adonijah thereupon swore allegiance to Solomon, and the struggle between the brothers was over. After a reign of forty years and six months David died (about 1017), and was laid to rest in a rock which he had hollowed for himself on the southern slope of Mount Zion.

David was sincerely mourned by his people. Every one realized that he had made Israel independent, great, and prosperous. His mistakes were gradually forgotten. Death had transfigured him. Posterity idealized him; he became the standard by which future kings were to be judged. With the lapse of the centuries, his transfiguration assumed an ever purer, more ideal form, and David became the model of a virtuous king and a holy singer.

CHAPTER IV

KING SOLOMON
(1017-977)

The perfect order which David instituted throughout Israel would have made it comparatively easy for any successor of even mediocre capacity to conduct the government upon his death. Solomon, however, was a man of extraordinary ability, and his ambition was to raise his kingdom to the very highest pinnacle of glory. With the means which his father had left him, it would not have been difficult for him to gain new conquests. But Solomon decided to remain true to his name (Shlomo) and to devote himself to the arts of peace. Though he was hardly twenty years old when he ascended the throne, he already enjoyed a reputation for wisdom and keenness of judgment. When he visited the great shrine in Gibeon, he prayed, it was said, not for long life, riches and honor, but for wisdom and for a sense of justice. His well-known decision in the case of a child that was claimed by two women, which he knew would call the true mother heart into expression, only confirmed his reputation for wisdom. He is also said to have occupied himself with the art of poetry, as expressed in fables (Mashal). Nevertheless, this wise king committed many an error also,

owing to his overestimation of the dignity of kingship. To render his throne secure, he had no scruples in doing away with Adonijah, his older brother and rival. The faithful Joab suffered a similar fate because he had embraced his brother's cause. The high priest Abiathar was removed from his office for the same reason. The Benjaminite Shimei who threw stones at David and cursed him as he was fleeing from Absalom was put to death. Solomon waded in blood to the throne which was now secure.

Solomon's first aim was to surround his court with the splendor befitting the dignity of a great king. As an extensive harem was regarded in those days as an element of royal splendor, Solomon acted in accordance with the custom then prevailing. Moreover, he expected that such alliances with many royal houses would add to his security and power. His first wife was Naamah (the Beautiful), an Ammonite princess. What flattered his pride most was his marriage with the daughter of the great Egyptian king Psusennes. As a result of this alliance he introduced many Egyptian luxuries into Israel, among which were horses and chariots. He continued on terms of the closest intimacy with Hiram, king of Tyre, which resulted in extensive enterprises. The support of his large harem and of his brilliant court, and the display of royal pomp and magnificence at the reception of ambassadors from tributory and friendly kings, involved a large expenditure of treasure. As the royal house possessed no landed property of its own, the people had to pay for all this magnificence.

Solomon's glory was heightened by his building enterprises. The determination to erect a magnificent temple to the God of Israel came to him immediately upon his ascension to the throne, and he began to make preparations at once. The site had

already been selected on Mount Moriah, northeast of Jerusalem, where David had built an altar upon the cessation of the plague. Gold and silver had also been provided by David for that purpose. Stones could be obtained from the quarries near Jerusalem, and from his father-in-law Pharaoh Psusennes Solomon learned how to obtain laborers cheaply. He simply reduced to forced labor the one hundred and fifty thousand surviving Canaanites, the natives whom Saul began to exterminate, and whom David left in peace as harmless. Eighty thousand of these serfs were forced to work in quarries day and night to dig and hew the blocks, under the guidance of experts brought from Biblos (Giblim), and seventy thousand were employed in raising and hauling the stones to the site. Three thousand Israelitish overseers looked after the workmen, under an overseer-in-chief named Adoniram. The cedar and cypress wood needed for the building was furnished by Hiram of Tyre, Solomon's friend. The trees were felled in the Lebanon. The timber was fastened into rafts, and floated down to Joppa, whence it was laboriously transported into Jerusalem over hills and valleys. This labor was performed by thirty thousand Israelites who were levied for that purpose, and who worked in shifts of ten thousand for a period of one month. In compensation for the building material furnished by Hiram, Solomon supplied him with wheat, wine, and oil as long as the temple was in the process of construction. For the gold which Hiram advanced for the interior decorations of the temple, Solomon turned over to him twenty cities of the tribe of Asher, bordering on Phoenicia. Hiram had these cities settled by a mixed population, and the territory received the name of the "District of the Gentiles" (Galil), later called Galilee.

After three years spent in these preparations, the actual work of building was begun under the direction of Phoenician architects furnished by Hiram, and in Phoenician style. The temple was constructed of square stone blocks, the walls on the inside being lined with boards of cedarwood. These boards contained carved figures of palms, open flowers, and cherubim (winged beings with human faces), which were overlaid with gold. The building was sixty cubits (about ninety feet) long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, and was divided into the Holy of Holies (twenty cubits square), and the sanctuary or temple proper (forty cubits long and twenty cubits wide). In the Holy of Holies were placed two cherubim of gilded olive-wood each ten cubits high, with wings each five cubits long, for the reception of the Ark which contained the Tablets of the Law. In the sanctuary there was only an altar, with five candlesticks to its right and left, and a table for the shew bread. All these were made of cedarwood overlaid with gold. At the entrance of the sanctuary was an open porch (Ulam), in front of which stood two massive bronze columns, beautifully formed and ornamented with capitals, which received the still unexplained names of Yachin and Boaz. The temple was surrounded by a great courtyard, and within the outer court a great bronze altar was erected, supplied with an extensive reservoir, the "brazen sea," ornamented with floral figures above and below its rim. This reservoir was supported by twelve bronze bullocks: three on each side. The officiating priests who washed their hands and feet each time they entered the sanctuary, drew the water from that reservoir probably by means of turning cocks. Ten small reservoirs, artistically wrought, were placed on wheels in the outer court, to be easily moved from place to place. Golden

utensils and golden vessels for the offering of sacrifices and of incense were provided in large numbers. Both the interior and the exterior of the temple presented an appearance of wealth and magnificence. The two columns of the porch and the great reservoir were regarded as wonderful works of art.

Alongside of the sacrificial cult, Solomon provided also for an uplifting worship by means of song and harp accompaniments, and, for this purpose, he had a number of harps and flutes made out of sandalwood. At the completion of the work, which took seven years in building (about 1007), Solomon dedicated the temple with great solemnity in the seventh month, after the harvest and the vintage had been gathered. The elders of the tribes, the chiefs of the families, and a great concourse of people assembled from near and far to witness the ceremonies. The solemnities began with the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant from Mount Zion to Mount Moriah. As soon as the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, a thick cloud is said to have filled the entire temple, which was interpreted as an indication of God's favor towards the new sanctuary. A large number of sacrifices was offered in honor of the dedication. The temple, glittering with gold and bronze, simple in construction, and without any image of the divinity, made a deep and lasting impression upon the people. Henceforth, the temple became the pride of Israel.

With the dedication of the Temple, an hierarchy also was created such as could not have existed under former circumstances. The high priest became the head of all other priests, and differences in rank were introduced. Azariah, the son of Zadok, was appointed to the high-priesthood upon the death of his father. The Levites became subordinate to the priests of the house of Aaron.

Some of them assisted at the sacrifices. Others were appointed to guard the temple on all sides, while several families acted as singers and musicians. The temple and the newly introduced hierarchy made Jerusalem the capital of the country in reality. In the fall festival, pilgrims came to Jerusalem to attend the solemn services, such as the local altars could not possibly offer. As Jerusalem gradually became also a commercial emporium where foreign goods and curios were exhibited, it attracted still more visitors from all the tribes. The youngest city of all the tribes thus surpassed all other cities in importance. Solomon fortified Jerusalem on all sides; and the temple mount was also within the circle of the fortifications. The wells of En Etam (six miles south of Jerusalem) supplied the city and the temple with water by means of an aqueduct which Solomon constructed.

The royal palace was thirteen years in building, and consisted of a group of buildings on the northern hill, in the Millo portion of the city. Next to the entrance was the House of the Lebanon Forest, so called on account of its numerous cedar columns, which served as an armory where three hundred guardsmen kept watch. These, provided with golden spears and shields, accompanied the king whenever he went to the temple. The Hall of Justice was also located in this building. The ivory throne covered with gold, which was regarded as a wonder, stood in this hall, where Solomon dispensed justice which he regarded as one of the most sacred duties of the king, and where he received the ambassadors from other kings. A separate palace was erected for the king, his servants, and his wives. The Egyptian princess, his chief queen, had a palace for her own, separated from the residence of Solomon's other wives. The princes and the nobles also erected magnificent palaces for themselves.

All this magnificence on the part of the king and the upper classes was made possible by the prosperity brought into the country through three channels. In the first place, King Solomon received a large supply of gold, silver, spices, horses, and mules both as tribute and as voluntary gifts from kings who sought his friendship. He also received a large revenue from his connection with Egypt. Solomon established in his own country a market for Egyptian horses and chariots. The princes of Aram and of the countries of the Euphrates did not have to go all the way to Egypt any longer to do their trading. The land of Israel became the gateway for the import and export of these articles of war, which resulted in extensive commercial enterprises. Of course, Solomon bought a large supply of horses and war chariots for his own use also. He is said to have possessed twelve thousand saddle-horses and fourteen hundred war-chariots, with a span of two horses each, for which he erected extensive buildings with four thousand stalls. But the richest revenue Solomon derived was from his commerce with India. Upon the advice and with the assistance of his ally, Hiram of Tyre, Solomon built a fleet of vessels manned by Phoenician as well as by Israelitish sailors from the tribes of Asher and Zebulun , and opened a port at Elath, at the head of the Arabian Gulf. From this port the fleet entered the Red Sea, coasting up to the mouth of the Indus in the Land of Ophir (the modern Sind). After a course of three years, the fleet returned laden with four hundred talents of gold, a large amount of silver, ivory, ebony, sandalwood and spices; and with each return of the fleet new treasures were brought. These were transported to Jerusalem on camel back. The port of Elath became a city of great importance; Judahns obtained a footing there, and the territory of Is-

rael was thus extended, and stretched from the Arabian Gulf to the Euphrates. To facilitate the transportation of horses and wagons to the countries of Aram and the Euphrates, and of goods from Phoenicia to Elath, Solomon had to build good highways, and he also took care to provide ample protection for the caravans. Of importance for later times was the building of the city of Tadmor (Palm City, later called Palmyra) by Solomon, between Damascus and the Euphrates—a city which still played an important part even in Roman times.

Solomon devoted his energies to create order in the internal affairs of his country, as well as to provide for the future. He was fortunate in possessing faithful officials who carried his orders into execution. As a result of the domestic order, the territorial expansion, and the great prosperity which his country enjoyed, the Land of Israel became a world power, vying with the greatest states of antiquity, Assyria and Egypt. The greatest blessing of Solomon's reign was the undisturbed peace and security that prevailed. The security and prosperity of the country attracted to it a large number of foreigners, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites and Egyptians. The Phoenician merchants formed an independent colony in Jerusalem, under the protection of Hiram, and under their own laws, customs, and religious worship. The peculiar worship of the Israelites, as conducted in the magnificent temple of Jerusalem, may have induced some of these foreigners to place themselves under "the wings of the God of Israel." The Israelitish sailors and merchants extended the fame of their people and the knowledge of their God in all the far away countries whither their travels had led them. The Queen of the Land of Sabea (Sheba), on the South Arabian coast of the Red Sea, even came to Jerusalem to verify for herself the truth

of the fame of King Solomon and of the God of Israel that had reached her. She returned to her country as a great admirer of Solomon's wisdom and of the temple of God which he had erected.

But this internal and external splendor of Solomon's reign contained within it also the germs of its own dissolution. While the tribes of Benjamin and Judah became more closely united on account of the location of Jerusalem and the temple on their border, the antipathy between the northern and the southern tribes, or between the house of Israel and the house of Judah, did not diminish. The northern tribes, in spite of the general prosperity, resented as oppressive the tax on the products of their fields which went to the support of Solomon's court. For Solomon had divided the country into twelve arbitrary districts, each of which had to supply the king, one month in the year, with all the necessaries for the maintenance of his table, of his court, and even of his numerous horses. Over each district an official was appointed to see that the provisions were furnished. As a result of this arrangement, the old tribal bonds were broken. This innovation, together with the forced labor for the royal building enterprises, and the compulsory contributions for the maintenance of the court, created a high degree of dissatisfaction among the tribes. This dissatisfaction was as yet hidden, but it needed only an opportunity to make itself manifest. With all his wisdom, Solomon was not far-seeing enough to realize that his own mistakes were undermining the very foundation of his state.

Among Solomon's building superintendents there was an Ephraimite, Jeroboam, son of Nebat, of Zereda, a man of courage and of great ambition. Solomon was so pleased with the skill and firmness he displayed in handling the forced laborers in building the fortifications around Jerusalem that he

promoted him to the office of governor over the district of Ephraim and Manasseh. Jeroboam had occasion to learn of the dissatisfaction existing among the ever restive Ephraimites, and determined to utilize it to his own advantage when the opportunity should present itself. The favorable moment came very soon. Solomon committed the folly of tolerating shrines for idolatrous sacrifices. Whether his foreign wives had wheedled him into this step in his advanced age, or whether the foreign residents of Jerusalem, such as the Phoenicians, had obtained his permission to worship their gods after their own fashion on Israelitish soil, it sufficed that shrines to Astarte and other idols had been erected on the Mount of Olives. The danger that Israelites themselves might lapse into idolatry again with such examples before them was not wholly past; and Solomon ignored the denunciation and the threat of a courageous prophet who warned him against this step. Accordingly, Ahijah of Shiloh, the prophet, determined to utilize Jeroboam, of whose boundless ambition he had learned, as a means of punishing Solomon. As Jeroboam was once leaving Jerusalem, Ahijah approached him, took hold of his mantle, and tore it in twelve pieces, ten of which he gave to Jeroboam as a symbol that he would rule over the ten tribes of Israel. This inflamed Jeroboam's ambition to such an extent that he hastened to Ephraim, and raised there the standard of rebellion against Solomon. Solomon heard of it in time, and sent his mercenaries there at once to remove the ringleader. Jeroboam fled to Egypt. Fortunately for him, a new dynasty had just begun its reign in Egypt, and Shishak (Sheshenk), the first king of that dynasty, dissolved the alliance existing between Solomon and his father-in-law, and looked rather with hostile, jealous eyes upon the powerful kingdom of Israel. He, therefore, re-

ceived the rebel Jeroboam with open arms. Another enemy of Israel, an Edomite prince, was also protected by Shishak. Hadad, a descendant of the Edomite king whom David had conquered, was ambitious to regain the independence of his country. Supported by Shishak, Hadad gathered a band about him, returned to Edom, and made raids upon the caravans of Solomon on the road between Elath and the borders of Israel. These raids occasioned much loss; but Solomon's soldiers were not able to stop them.

Another danger began to threaten from the north. Rezon, a servant of King Hadadezer whom David had conquered, gathered a robber band about him after his master's defeat, made raids in the region between the Euphrates and the Lebanon, and succeeded in capturing Damascus and in making himself king of that city. He was a bitter enemy of the Israelites and of their northern allies, but Solomon ignored him, too. Out of small beginnings that could have been easily suppressed at the start, powers hostile to Israel began to develop here and there. And now, an internal division was to take place. Israel was not fated to remain a powerful state. Solomon, however, did not live to see the doom which was hanging over his kingdom. He died in peace, about sixty years of age (about 977) and was buried, probably with great pomp, in the royal tomb of David. He was succeeded by his son Rehoboam. Posterity that exaggerated Solomon's wisdom and mental gifts ascribed to him a mysterious power over spirits and demons by means of a magic ring which he possessed. The Israelitish empire raised by Solomon to power and glory was like a fairy land erected by busy spirits. The magic vanished at Solomon's death; his son did not inherit the magic ring.

CHAPTER V

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (977-887)

Had Rehoboam been a man of courage and determination the succession would have passed into his hands without any disturbance and division. He was, however, devoid of any of the qualities of his father and grandfather; he was haughty, vacillating, and was dreaming of a life of ease and indulgence. He was soon roughly awakened out of his dream, and a breach occurred in his kingdom that was beyond repair.

Upon the death of Solomon, Jeroboam returned from Egypt, probably with the assistance of his protector Shishak, and betook himself to Shechem, the ever restive second city of importance in the kingdom. At the instigation of this bold Ephraimite, a popular assembly was called to which the elders of the other tribes were invited, to discuss the means whereby the despotic yoke might be shaken off without breaking suddenly with the House of Solomon. It was decided that the elders should not go to Jerusalem to pay their homage to the new king as was the custom, but that Rehoboam be invited to Shechem to receive the allegiance of the elders. Rehoboam, thinking that his presence would quiet

the turbulence, accepted the invitation, and came to Schechem accompanied by his advisers, some of whom had served under his father, and some, the younger, of his own choosing. Adoniram, who had charge of the serf laborers, and who was accustomed to handle them with severity and with the whip, also came with Rehoboam. The elders laid their grievances before the king, and Jeroboam, their spokesman, addressed him rather harshly: "Thy father made our yoke hard; but do thou now make lighter the hard service of thy father, and the heavy yoke which he put upon us, and we will serve thee." Shocked at the harshness of Jeroboam's speech, Rehoboam asked with suppressed anger that he be given three days in which to consider his reply. Rehoboam himself did not know how to act. The elder statesmen advised him to be conciliatory; the younger, his own boon companions, urged him to be severe, and the council of the latter prevailed. When Jeroboam and the elders came to him on the third day to receive his reply, he answered roughly: "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will even add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The scheming Jeroboam who had counted upon such a reply, thereupon turned to the elders, and raised the standard of rebellion with the words: "What part have we in David, and what portion in the son of Jesse? To thy tents, O Israel, and thou, O David, look after thine own house!" The assembled Ephraimites, glad at the opportunity to show their hitherto suppressed hatred of the house of David, joined Jeroboam at once. With Jeroboam at their head, the Schechemites armed themselves, and attacked the house where Rehoboam was sojourning. The king sent the slave driver Adoniram to scatter the rebels. Adoniram was killed by a shower of stones and

Rehoboam himself fled in his carriage to Jerusalem. The division of the kingdom was accomplished.

The tribes of Judah, with its vassal tribe Simeon, and of Benjamin remained loyal to the house of David. The union between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin had become very close during the preceding reign, and there were more Benjaminites than Judahns in Jerusalem. Relying upon the support of these tribes, Rehoboam began to make preparations to reduce the rebel tribes to obedience by force. Jeroboam, in anticipation of such an event, had meantime succeeded in convincing the rebel tribes of the necessity of selecting a king of their own who was to defend them against the attack of Rehoboam. As he was the only man of ability and daring, and an Ephraimite at that, the Ephraimites readily fell in with his scheme, induced the other tribes to join them, and Jeroboam was accordingly made king over the ten northern tribes (about 977-955). The incompatible union between Israel and Judah which existed for a hundred years, was now broken forever. The house of Israel sacrificed its prosperity to its desire for independence, though the better elements of both kingdoms must have regarded this separation with grief and sorrow. The impending civil war was averted by the prophet Shemaiah who advised the assembled Judahns and Benjaminites, in the name of God, not to fight against their brethren, since God himself had caused the separation. Unimportant skirmishes did take place from time to time as was inevitable between two hostile neighboring states, but these led to no results.

To avert the likelihood of frequent attacks which would necessitate the maintenance of an armed force, both kings sought to strengthen their positions by means of foreign alliances. Rehoboam

formed a league with the newly established kingdom of Damascus which would threaten Jeroboam in the north. Jeroboam, again, made an alliance with Egypt, Judah's hostile neighbor to the southwest. Rehoboam surrounded his capital with fortifications, as a protection both against Egypt and Israel. These, however, proved of little avail. Shishak, with a large army of infantry, cavalry and war chariots, made an expedition against Judah (about 972), captured the fortified cities one after another, and penetrated to Jerusalem. The capital seems to have surrendered without resistance, and Shishak contented himself with despoiling the palace and the temple of all the gold and silver which Solomon had accumulated. The kingdom of Judah and Rehoboam's throne he left undisturbed.

The splendor and the greatness of the kingdom which Solomon left behind were at an end. The greater portion tore itself loose, and the small part that was left very probably became a vassal of Egypt, and had to pay an annual tribute. The former tributary states of Judah, Philistia and Edom, took advantage of Judah's weakness to resume their independence. With the loss of Edom, the commerce with Ophir had to be abandoned, and Judah was thus deprived of a profitable source of revenue and wealth. The extensive trade in Egyptian horses and war chariots which extended to the Euphrates could no longer be continued, since the kingdom of Jeroboam cut off the outlet to the north countries. The golden glitter of Solomon's days disappeared from Judah; the fairy land vanished.

Jeroboam, in the northern kingdom, also met with many difficulties. As was to be expected, he made Shechem his capital and the centre of northern activities. Shechem was to rival and even to

excel Jerusalem. The tribe of Ephraim formed the foundation of the new kingdom which in consequence was renamed Ephraim or the House of Joseph. But the unruly Shechemites, the leaders of Ephraim, ever eager to bring about innovations, and the first to tire of them, soon assumed a hostile attitude towards Jeroboam when he took his new dignity seriously and demanded obedience. In consequence, Jeroboam soon left Shechem, and made Tirzah (the modern Telluzah) his capital.

To obviate the need of pilgrimages to the temple of Jerusalem to which the people had been accustomed and in which there lurked a political danger, Jeroboam hit upon a mischievous scheme which was to lead Israel back into idolatry. During his sojourn in Egypt, Jeroboam became acquainted with the animal worship of the Egyptians, and learned the stupefying effect it had upon the people. The introduction of the Apis worship in Israel would have the same effect upon the Israelites, would render them more tractable, and, in addition, would raise Jeroboam in the favor of the Egyptian court. Moreover, Jeroboam determined to pose as a restorer of the ancient religion of Israel and not as the creator of a new one. In Egypt, and later in their own country, the Israelites had worshiped the sacred bulls, the symbol of God. The imageless worship of the temple of Jerusalem was Solomon's own innovation; Jeroboam came to restore the ancient cult of Israel. This shrewd scheme Jeroboam carried into execution. He forbade pilgrimages to the temple of Jerusalem and ordered the erection of the images of the God of Israel in the shape of a young bull (calf). These he placed in Bethel and Dan, which were already regarded as holy places, and which would serve the convenience of both the northern and southern tribes. Pointing at the image, Jeroboam ex-

claimed: "This is thy God, O Israel, who brought thee out of Egypt." To wean the Israelites further away from participating in the harvest festival at Jerusalem, he instituted such a festival in the eighth instead of in the seventh month. The people, on the whole, did indeed regard Jeroboam's innovation as a restoration of their ancient cult; nor did this cult conflict with their deep-seated conviction of the unity of God. Jeroboam did not introduce polytheism; he simply symbolized God in the form of a bull, the embodiment of power and fertility. This visualization of their God rather pleased them; the spirituality of God was less comprehensible to them than his unity. Moreover, no acts of immorality and debauchery were connected with the new cult as they used to be with the Baal worship. The people, therefore, gradually accustomed themselves to visit Dan or Bethel where the king himself officiated on the occasion of the great festival. Otherwise, they offered their sacrifices either at home, or at the nearby shrines. Jeroboam accomplished his purpose; the people were stupefied and yielded slavish obedience. "Ephraim has become like a silly dove, without understanding. It asks counsel of a stick of wood, and of a staff they inquire the future." (Hosea, 7:11; 4:12.) The Levites alone resisted this innovation and migrated to Judah rather than to be forced to officiate in the new cult. Jeroboam, therefore, appointed as priests whomever he could get. On a festival Jeroboam himself officiated as priest, either in imitation of the Egyptian custom, or to add to the dignity of the new priesthood. This new cult continued throughout the existence of the northern kingdom. None of Jeroboam's successors even attempted to modify it.

Nadab succeeded his father Jeroboam. His reign, however, was brief. He was murdered and

City of Shechem

the entire family of Jeroboam was exterminated by Baasha, a soldier, who usurped the throne. The dynasty which Baasha founded made no changes in the cult. The political attitude towards the House of Judah also remained unchanged. Baasha and his son engaged in petty feuds with Asa, Rehoboam's successor, as their predecessors had with Abijam, Rehoboam's son. Not until four decades after the division did bloody events occur that brought about a crisis in both kingdoms. Baasha's son Elah who was given to idleness and drunkenness was killed by Zimri, one of his servants, and his entire family was annihilated (about 932). Zimri, of course, ascended the throne, but he reigned only one week. As soon as the news of the king's murder reached the army which was then engaged in besieging a Philistine city, Gibbethon, the soldiers proclaimed their commander-in-chief, Omri, as king. Omri immediately proceeded to Tirzah. Finding the gates locked, he laid siege to the city, and made a breach in the wall. Realizing his helplessness, Zimri set fire to the palace and threw himself into the flames, the third king of Israel out of five to meet with a violent death. A fourth was soon to follow. Omri met with opposition on the part of Tibni, son of Ginath, probably a native of Tirzah, who was chosen king by the residents of the capital. A civil war broke out which continued four years (932-928). The military party finally gained the upper hand. Tibni was killed, and Omri remained sole ruler (928). Omri did not care to retain Tirzah as the capital both because the royal palace had been burned by Zimri and also because of the hostility of the defeated party. Nor did he care to take up his residence in Shechem on account of the turbulent and unruly nature of its inhabitants. As there was no other city of importance in the cen-

tre of his kingdom, Omri decided to build a new capital city for himself, and selected an oblong hill about six miles northwest of Schechem for that purpose. On that hill, which he bought, Omri erected a palace and other houses, fortified it, gave it the name of Samaria (Shomron), and took up his residence there, a year after his victory over Tibni (927). This was the beginning of the city which rivaled Jerusalem for two centuries, and which, after a desolation of over two centuries, was to rise again only to renew its hostile attacks upon Jerusalem and Judah. The new capital gave its name to the entire kingdom which was designated as the land of Samaria.

Omri's ambition was to make his country great, respected, and rich, and he was shrewd enough to realize that peace with the house of David was indispensable to the prosperity of both kingdoms. He therefore formed an alliance with the kingdom of Judah, and the friendly relations between the neighbors continued during the reign of Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, and of his own sons. To stimulate the commerce of his kingdom, he sought the friendship of the Phoenicians. Tyre had also just passed through a period of regicide, until Ithobal (Ethbaal), a priest of Astarte, ascended the throne. These internal disturbances had weakened Phoenicia, and it was to Ithobal's advantage to have a friendly neighbor in Samaria. Omri and Ithobal, therefore, concluded an offensive and defensive alliance, and their friendship was further cemented by the marriage of Ahab, Omri's son, to Jezebel, Ithobal's daughter. Strengthened by these alliances, Omri turned his attentions to Moab, that had regained her independence in the reign of Jeroboam, and he reduced her again to a state of vassalage. He was, however, deprived of the fruit of his victory by Ben Hadad I, king of Damascus,

Shomron (Samaria)

who was an ally of Moab. Ben Hadad overran Israel, rescued Moab, and compelled Omri, in addition, to maintain caravan routes for Aramean merchants through his kingdom, and to afford them safe conduct. Baffled in his military efforts, Omri determined to cultivate still closer relations with the Phoenicians, even to the extent of Canaanizing his people. Israel and Phoenicia were related in language and customs; why should religion form a barrier between them? Jeroboam's bull worship appeared still too Israelitish, since Jeroboam represented the bull as a symbol of the God of Israel. Omri went beyond that. He introduced the cults of Baal, or Adonis, and Astarte as the official religion, erected a temple to Baal in Samaria, imported priests to officiate in the temple, and ordered that sacrifices be offered to Baal and Astarte throughout his kingdom. The adoption of the Phoenician cult would, moreover, tend to cement the commercial ties between Israel and Tyre. As a matter of fact, Israel did enjoy great prosperity under Omri. His son, Ahab, was able to erect for himself a palace of ivory which even Solomon could not afford, having to content himself merely with an ivory throne. This prosperity convinced Omri of the wisdom of his policy, and he was the more determined to make the people of Israel forget their God and their origin as a people set apart for the purpose of opposing idolatry. As Omri died six years after the building of Samaria (about 922), he was unable to revolutionize the customs and religious beliefs of his people in so short a time. His son Ahab (922-901), who continued his political policy of friendship with Judah and Phoenicia, was to continue his religious policy also.

Ahab was of a weak, pliable nature, and temperamentally a lover of peace and ease. Had it depended upon him alone, his father's policy of forc-

ing Israel into idolatry would have failed. His wife Jezebel, however, was a woman of a strong character and of a firm determination, and it was she who carried on the work of her father-in-law. This Phoenician princess held the reins of power in her own hands; and just as Ahab was driven to undertake a war on Aram against his will, so was he urged on by Jezebel to many atrocious acts which led to dire results. Jezebel established the cults of Baal and Astarte firmly; erected a temple to these gods in Samaria, and brought over from Phoenicia four hundred and fifty priests of Baal and four hundred priests of Astarte, and maintained them at the expense of the king. Some of these officiated in the capital, while others were scattered in the other cities and villages of the kingdom to introduce the new cults there. These priests wore female garb, painted their faces and eyes, had their arms bare to the shoulders, and carried with them swords, hatchets, rattles, fifes, cymbals and drums. Dancing and howling they whirled in a circle, alternately bowed their heads to the ground, and trailed their heads in the mud. They then used to bite their arms and cut their bodies with swords and knives until the blood flowed—and this blood they offered as a sacrifice to the blood-thirsty goddess. In their frenzy some of them used to emasculate themselves and form an abominable procession. Jezebel believed that, with the help of this band of priests, she would wean the people of Israel away from the God of their fathers, and bring about their complete transformation. The altars dedicated to the God of Israel were destroyed, and the people were to be forced to offer their sacrifices at the new shrines in charge of the Phoenician priests. The residents of the cities, emasculated by the luxury which came in the train of the restored prosperity, readily yielded to the sensuous

charms of the new cults. Only about seven thousand refused to yield to Baal. A part of the people, the inhabitants of the villages among them, fluctuated between the God of Israel and Baal, and worshipped Baal publicly and Yahveh secretly. It was a period of stress and confusion, such as precedes a historic crisis and produces a powerful personality, mastered by lofty convictions, whose singleness of purpose, determination, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice save the day from the dangers of the threatened innovations.

Such a powerful personality appeared at that time in the prophet Elijah the Tishbite (flourished about 920-900). Not a native but rather one of the settlers (Toshabim) of Gilead, he was a man of a strong nature, risking his life recklessly for his convictions, the very embodiment of religious zeal. He made his appearance in the midst of a storm, raged and thundered against the weakling Ahab like a storm, was as elusive as a storm, and finally disappeared from the scene in the midst of a storm. Elijah was completely mastered by the idea of saving the endangered worship of the God of Israel, and to this service he dedicated his life. In contrast with the feminine and gorgeous apparel of the Phoenician priests, Elijah wore a girdle and a black hairy cloak, and let his hair grow long. As a protest against the riotous living of the Baal worshippers, he led the life of a Nazarite which consisted in abstaining from wine, and from cutting one's hair. In such a garb and with such a simple life he announced the comprehensive thought: "Yahveh alone is God!" His enthusiasm gained him many followers who grouped themselves about him as disciples, and adopted the Naziritic life. They led a simple existence, avoided the cities with their refinements and luxuries, lived in tents, drank no wine, refused to engage in farming,

but rather, like the patriarchs, followed a pastoral life. Jonadab, son of Rechab, undoubtedly a disciple of Elijah, firmly fixed such a mode of existence for himself and his descendants. Simplicity and abstemiousness were to be a constant protest against the effeminacy and sensuality of the worshippers and priests of Baal.

Surrounded by his disciples, Elijah began his attacks upon the priests and prophets of Baal, traveled from city to city, called the people together, and carried them away by his impetuous eloquence the burden of which was: "Yahveh alone is God, and Baal and Astarte are helpless idols." He may even have laid violent hands upon the priests of Baal with whom he came in conflict. Jezebel, of course, could not long ignore the zealous activities of the Tishbite. Her mercenaries fell upon Elijah's disciples and killed all on whom they could lay their hands. They were the first martyrs who died in defense of the ancient religion of Israel; and Jezebel, the daughter of a Phoenician priest, was the first religious persecutor. Elijah himself could never be apprehended. On the other hand, Elijah's teachings penetrated even the palace. Obadaiah, the steward of Ahab's palace, was a secret disciple of Elijah, and provided bread and water for a hundred fellow disciples who sought refuge in the grottoes of Mount Carmel from Jezebel's wrath. Elijah became a power to be reckoned with.

One day Elijah appeared before Ahab to denounce him to his face for his misdeeds. Ahab was fond of building palaces and fortifications. Samaria was his summer residence; for his winter residence he built a new city in the Plain of Jezreel and erected there a palace of ivory for himself. As Ahab needed extensive pleasure grounds for his palace, he desired to buy a vineyard adjoining his

palace, belonging to Naboth, one of the most respected citizens of Jezreel. Naboth, however, refused to sell the inheritance of his fathers, and Ahab was out of humor in consequence. As soon as Jezebel learned of the occurrence, she spoke scornfully to her husband: "Is this the way thou wouldst rule over Israel?" and promised to give him Naboth's vineyard. Upon the trumped-up charges that he had insulted the king and the gods, supported by perjured witnesses, the subservient elders of Jezreel condemned Naboth and his sons to death. By this pretty scheme, Jezebel was able to keep her promise to Ahab, since the property of an executed criminal reverted to the king, and she addressed Ahab triumphantly: "Now thou mayst take possession of Naboth's vineyard, for he is dead." As soon as Elijah heard of this outrage, he could contain himself no longer, and came to Jezreel. As Ahab entered the vineyard Elijah confronted him. In a voice of thunder, the prophet turned to the king: "Thou hast murdered, and now thou wishest also to inherit? God saw the innocent blood of Naboth and his sons, and thou shalt pay for it in this very field." The prophetic threat had a crushing effect upon Ahab who put on sack cloth and repented of this crime, but Jezebel soon mastered him again and banished his scruples. Elijah disappeared.

Elijah appeared before Ahab a second time to announce to him that a famime of some years' duration was about to come upon the land, and then as suddenly disappeared. As a matter of fact, a severe famime did rage throughout the land, and there was not even sufficient provender for the king's horses and mules. In this extremity Ahab sent messenger after messenger to look for Elijah; but his whereabouts were unknown. One day Elijah appeared before Obadaiah, Ahab's steward, and

addressed him briefly: "Go tell thy master: 'Elijah is here.'" Seeing Elijah, Ahab exclaimed: "Art thou come, O troubler of Israel?" Whereupon the prophet replied: "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, by going after the Baalim." As though he were there to command, the prophet ordered the king to assemble the priests of Baal upon Mount Carmel, where it would be decided who was the true and who was the false prophet.

The occurrence on Mount Carmel, where the conflict took place, must have had an extraordinary effect; but the traditional report of it is rather obscure. All the prophets of Baal came, upon the order of the king. An immense multitude assembled to watch the conflict. Ahab also was present. Elijah addressed the assembly: "How long will ye skip like birds from one twig to the other? If Yahveh be god, worship him; if Baal be god, serve him." Thereupon, he told the prophets of Baal to build an altar, and to call upon their god to perform a miracle. As was their custom, they worked themselves up into a frenzy, cut their bodies with knives and swords until blood flowed, and called from morning till noon, "O Baal, hear us!" There was no response. Elijah urged them on with biting irony: "Call ye louder, perhaps he is holding a council, or he is busy in some pursuit, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and may thus be awakened." When the priests of Baal gave up their efforts in despair, Elijah prayed softly: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, this day let it be known that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that at thy word have I done all these things." Thereupon, it is said, a fire came down from heaven, and consumed Elijah's sacrifice upon the altar, even licking the water dry; and the people were so overwhelmed that they they fell upon

their faces, exclaiming: "Yahveh, he is God." Elijah embraced this opportunity to wreak a fearful vengeance upon the prophets of Baal; he ordered the people to kill them and throw their bodies in the river Kishon. Ahab, who was present, was so dazed by the miracle that he offered no resistance to the murder of his prophets. But as soon as Jezebel heard of the occurrence, she determined upon the capture and death of the prophet, and Elijah fled to Judah. Even there he could find no safety owing to the friendship between Jehoshaphat and Ahab. Elijah fled to Beersheba and was so desperate that he prayed for death. In a vision, while asleep, he was told to wander through the wilderness to Mount Horeb. When, in the dreadful solitude in a grotto of Sinai, he poured forth his sorrow: "I was zealous for Yahveh, because the Israelites forsook thy covenant, destroyed thine altars, annihilated thy prohets, and I am the only one left, and now they are seking my life also," the reply came to him that God was not in the storm, not in the earthquake, and not in the fire, but in the soft still voice. It was indicated to him that he should return on his way, appoint his successor, and make way for him. His reckless zeal, leading even to the shedding of blood, was censured in the message from Horeb, the place where the pure and simple knowledge of God and of morality was first revealed.

During Elijah's absence, Ahab seems to have made a truce with the followers of the prophet. Prophetic circles were formed; but they were not molested. Only one prophet, Micaiah, son of Imlah, remained hostile to Ahab. Whenever Ahab consulted him as to the future he predicted evil for Ahab. The king did not kill him, but kept him in prison. But the evil prophecies soon came into fulfillment. Ben Hadad II, king of Aram, grew more

and more powerful and ambitious of conquests. Taking advantage of Israel's weakness caused by the famine, Ben Hadad overran large portions of Israel, and finally besieged Samaria (about 904). In this extremity Ahab sued for peace, but Ben Hadad demanded such shameful conditions, one of which was the delivery to him of the king's wives and children, that the elders and the people advised Ahab to continue the resistance to the bitter end. Ahab had a small army compared with the numerous hosts of the enemy. But the Israelites, in making a sortie one day, fell upon the Arameans with the fury of despair and the enemy was completely routed. Ahab won another victory in the Plain of Jezreel and Ben Hadad himself was taken prisoner. It was his turn to sue for peace; and, with sack cloth on their loins and with ropes on their necks, in token of complete subjection, Ben Hadad's officers begged Ahab to spare the life of their king. Ahab felt flattered at the sight of his humiliated enemy begging for his life, and yielded. Ben Hadad came out of his hiding place, and Ahab placed him next to himself in his chariot. Of course, Ben Hadad promised everything. It was agreed that he was to return to Ahab all the cities which his father, Ben Hadad I, had taken from Omri, and that he was to open the caravan routes of Damascus to Ahab's merchants and afford them protection. The enemies of yesterday became friends, and formed a solemn alliance. A prophet of Israel who saw the folly of this generous treatment of a treacherous enemy, rebuked Ahab for it, and foretold dire results as a consequence.

Once safely home, Ben Hadad disregarded his promise and refused to give up Ramoth-Gilead, the most important city in the territory east of the Jordan; and Ahab was too indolent to insist upon its immediate delivery to him. And while he was

hesitating, Ben Hadad was increasing his strength. Ahab realized that his own army was not strong enough to dislodge Ben Hadad from Ramoth-Gilead. At that time Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, came to visit Ahab at Samaria. The friendship between the two kings was close; and the marriage of Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, to Joram, Jehoshaphat's son, cemented the union of the two families still more firmly. Ahab, therefore, embraced the opportunity of Jehoshaphat's visit to ask him if he would not join forces with him in the impending war against the Arameans. Jehoshaphat readily consented, and put himself and his army at Ahab's disposal. Jehoshaphat, however, desired to consult a prophet of Yahveh as to the outcome of the war, since he had little confidence in the prophets of Baal. To please his ally, Ahab allowed the prophetic disciples to come to Samaria, and to speak their opinions freely. Upon Ahab's question as to whether or not he should go against Ramoth-Gilead, they replied unanimously: "Go up, and Yahveh will deliver it in the hand of the king." However, this unanimity made Jehoshaphat suspicious of these prophets, and he asked Ahab to consult Micaiah. Ahab consented reluctantly, and had Micaiah brought before them. At first, Micaiah responded encouragingly like the other prophets; but, when pressed to state the real truth in Yahveh's name, Micaiah was seized by the prophetic spirit, and burst out almost unconsciously: "I saw all Israel scattered like a flock without a shepherd, and Yahveh said: 'They have no master, let them return to their homes in peace.'" Ahab ordered that the reckless prophet be kept in close confinement on a meagre portion of bread and water until his return. The war began. Ahab, who partly doubted and partly feared the evil prophecy, sought to escape his doom by wearing a disguise. But, at

the very beginning of the battle, he was struck by an arrow and fell in his chariot mortally wounded. He retained enough presence of mind to order his charioteer to remove him from the thick of the fight. His soldiers did not know it, and kept on fighting till evening. Only after the king had bled to death, the herald announced: "Let each one return to his city and to his land." The armies of Israel and Judah recrossed the Jordan; the Arameans won the battle and retained Ramoth-Gilead. While Ahab's body was on the road to Samaria for burial, his blood which filled his chariot overflowed into a passing brook and dogs licked it up.

Ahab was succeeded by his older son, Ahaziah, the first time in the history of Israel that the crown passed over to a grandson. His reign, however, was brief (901-900), and little mention is made of of him, except that he persisted in the idolatry of his father. When he sustained a fall from the lattice window of his balcony in Samaria, and fell seriously sick, he sent messengers to inquire of the oracle of Baal-Zebub, located in Philistine Ekron, whether or not he would recover. Just at that time, Elijah returned from his wanderings in Horeb, leading a solitary life, probably on Mount Carmel. He had chosen his successor, in Elisha, son of Shaphat, and appointed him in his characteristic manner. He found Elisha plowing, and approached him and threw his sombre prophetic mantle upon him. If Elisha were worthy of filling his place he would understand the sign, and Elisha did understand, for he left his team of oxen, ran after the prophet, and begged him to wait just long enough for him to kiss his parents farewell. "Return," Elijah replied briefly, "what have I done unto thee?" Elisha understood that he must leave his father and mother, suppress the yearnings of his heart and the habits of his life, if he were to be

a zealous prophet of God. Without returning to his parents, he followed Elijah, and served him, or, in the phrase of that day, "poured water on his hands." Elijah performed only one more public act. He went to meet Ahaziah's messengers who were on their way to Ekron, and called to them: "Tell the king who had sent ye." Is there no God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-Zebub concerning thy sickness?" From the description of the appearance and garb of the prophet given by the returned messengers, Ahaziah knew that Elijah had come back, and sent word to him to appear before the king. After some hesitancy, Elijah entered Samaria fearlessly, and announced to Ahaziah that he would not leave his sick bed any more. The king died soon after, childless, and was succeeded by his brother, Jehoram (899).

Elijah also disappeared from the scene at the same time. What became of him? His disciples and the disciples of his disciples coud not conceive that this fiery spirit should share the fate of common mortals, and said that he went up to heaven in a tempest. Succeeding generations could account for Elijah's enduring activities in behalf of the God of Israel against a ruthless idolatry, with its accompanying vices and luxuriousness, only by means of striking miracles. The greatest miracle, however, which Elijah performed consisted in the establishment of an association that kept alive the sacred flame of the ancient teachings and, according to the exigencies of the day, protested against the idolatrous perversity now loudly now quietly. The prophetic school which he founded lived as a community apart. Its members accepted no gifts, but toiled for their simple, meagre necessities. Elisha became their head, and, for a while, following in the footsteps of his master, led a secluded life mostly on Mount Carmel. He began to mingle

among the people after he had found an energetic man who was to bring ruin upon the house of Omri and who was to uproot the Phoenician cults.

Jehoram (899-887) clung to the idolatry of his father, though he was not zealous in spreading it among the people. Upon the death of his brother, he undertook a war against Mesha, king of Moab, who had refused to pay him tribute. Jehoshaphat of Judah again put himself and his army at the disposal of his ally. The attack on Moab was to be made through Edom, south of the Dead Sea, whose king, a vassal of Jehoshaphat, was to join his forces with the allies. On his way south, Jehoram visited Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat again insisted upon consulting a prophet of Yahveh as to the fortune of the war. Elisha was sent for. Ignoring Jehoram completely, whose face he wouldn't even look at, the prophet, out of respect to Jehoshaphat, deigned a reply. His prophecy, however, was a favorable one. Mesha who met the allies at the southern border of Moab was defeated, and fled to the mountain fastness of Kir-haraseth. Jehoram devastated all the Moabite cities through which he passed, filled the fruitful fields with stones, stopped up all the wells, cut down the fruit trees, and besieged Kirharaseth. Mesha, with a few hundred men, tried to break through the besiegers to reach the king of Edom whose treachery he especially resented. Desperate at the failure of his attempt, Mesha, in full view of the besiegers, offered up his oldest son as a sacrifice to his god Chemosh in the hope of appeasing this deity to whose anger he ascribed his defeat. It seems that an epidemic broke out in Jehoram's camp, and the allies withdrew in consequence. Moab had been devastated, but Mesha held his own. Soon after, upon the death of Jehoshaphat, Edom also broke away from Judah, and came to terms with Moab. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat

(894-888), and the brother-in-law of the king of Israel of the same name, went so far in his friendship with the royal house of Samaria that he introduced idolatrous pratices in Judah also. He was undoubtedly led to this step by his wife, Athaliah, who, like her mother Jezebel, was a fanatical adherent of the worship of Baal.

The doom hanging over the house of Ormi was about to be accomplished, through the instrumentality of Elisha, and the house of David was to be involved in its ruin. A change of dynasty took place in Damascus. Ben Hadad II who had waged war with Ahab was strangled by Hazael, one of his trusted servants, and the murderer ascended the throne. In the prophetic schools, this palace revolution was ascribed to Elisha. Hazael determined to recapture the cities which Ben Hadad, after his defeat, had restored to Ahab, and attacked the tribes east of the Jordan. Jehoram, king of Israel, hastened to the defense of Ramoth-Gilead. A stubborn battle followed and Jehoram was wounded by an arrow. To nurse his wound Jehoram went to Jezreel and left his army in charge of Jehu, one of his captains. One day a disciple of Elisha came to Jehu in his master's name, called him away from his comrades, led him into a secluded chamber, anointed him king of Israel, charged him with the annihilation of the house of Omri, and disappeared as suddenly as he had come. His fellow officers noticed a change in his demeanor on Jehu's reappearance, and asked him curiously what the prophet had told him. Jehu hesitated at first, but told them the truth finally. The officers of the army immediately offered him their homage, blew the horn, and shouted: "Long live King Jehu!" Jehu had all the roads closed leading to Jezreel, to prevent Jehoram from hearing of the rebellion, and, with part of his army, proceeded at

once to Jezreel where Jehoram was recuperating. From the frantic pace of the distant horseman which the watchman of the tower of Jezreel noticed, Jehoram recognized Jehu; and, when the messengers did not return whom he dispatched to meet Jehu, Jehoram became suspicious, ordered his chariot and went to meet Jehu in person. His nephew, Ahaziah, king of Judah, who had recently ascended the throne (888-887), and who had come to visit his sick uncle, accompanied him. They met Jehu at the field of Naboth, and when Jehoram called out: "Is it peace, Jehu?" Jehu replied: "What peace can there be with the acts of incest of thy mother Jezebel and her many witchcrafts?" Jehoram turned to flee, and advised Ahaziah to do likewise, when Jehu's arrow struck him, and he fell lifeless in his chariot. Jehu ordered Jehoram's body cast in the vineyard of Naboth, reminded his companion, Bidkar, of Elijah's threat against Ahab in this very field which both had witnessed, and declared himself as called upon to be the executor of the doom of the house of Ahab. Ahaziah, king of Judah, also fell, pierced by an arrow, dragged himself as far as Megiddo, and died there. The revolution was accomplished, and there was none to defend the house of Ahab.

As Jehu entered Jezreel, the queen mother Jezebel, richly attired, was courageous enough to look out of the palace window and to address Jehu ironically: "Is all well, thou Zimri, regicide?" Jehu ordered her dragged to the street, and she was trampled upon by the horses until her blood sprinkled the palace wall and the houses. When, later on, Jehu sent his men to bury her, because she was a king's daughter, there was nothing left of her but the skull and fragments of her hands and feet. The rest of her body had been devoured by dogs. This judgment for the crime against

Naboth and his children filled the people with horror. Jehu, however, was not done yet; about seventy members of the royal family were still living in Samaria, in charge of the elders and tutors. Jehu demanded of the elders to place one member of the royal family on the throne; these, however, realizing that Jehu did not mean it seriously, offered him their submission. Thereupon, Jehu ordered them to come to Jezreel and bring with them the heads of the members of the royal family; and so little loyalty existed for the house of Omri that this order was carried out to the letter, and the seventy heads were brought to Jehu in baskets. Jehu had the bleeding heads placed at night in two rows upon the city gate, and ordered the people of Jezreel to assemble there in the morning. Jehu, who combined shrewdness with determination, pointed out the gruesome sight to the people, and declared to them that he had conspired only against Jehoram while those fell by other hands than his own, and that Elijah's prophecy against the house of Ahab had been fulfilled. As none of the royal family survived, Jehu ascended the throne, and was hailed by the residents of Jezreel.

To win for himself the adherence of the worshippers of Yahveh, Jehu next turned his attention upon the destruction of the Baal cult, and betook himself to Samaria. On his way thither, he fell in with the brothers and relatives of Ahaziah, king of Judah, who, ignorant of the recent occurrences, had come either to avenge the murder of Ahaziah, or because they had been sent away from Jerusalem by Ahaziah's mother that she might have a free hand in her own intrigues. Upon Jehu's orders, all the princes of Judah were slain and thrown into a cistern. Near Samaria, Jehu met Jonadab, the faithful disciple of Elijah and the head of the

Nazaritic family, invited him into his chariot, and asked him to come with him to Samaria to witness his zeal in behalf of the God of Israel. Arrived in Samaria, Jehu ordered all the priests and worshippers of Baal to assemble in the Baal temple on a certain day, as though he himself were to participate in the service; the priests to wear their official garb. Armed guardsmen were secretly placed within and without the temple, while Jehu and Jonadab went within. No sooner was the service begun that the guardsmen fell upon the unsuspecting priests and worshippers within the temple, and those who fled outside were struck down by the guardsmen placed outside. None escaped. The altar and the idol were destroyed and the temple itself was soon a heap of ruins. Jehu ordered the destruction of all symbols of idolatrous worship throughout the land. Jehu acted as a disciple of Elijah, as one who is zealous in behalf of Yahveh.

While Jehu and Elisha were striving to remove idolatry from the northern kingdom, Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, was endeavoring to force it upon the kingdom of Judah. It is strange that women, who are naturally modest, were, in antiquity, especially devoted to the revolting cults of Baal and Astarte. Maacha, the mother of king Asa, introduced them in Jerusalem, Jezebel in Samaria, and now, Athaliah also was trying to find an abode for them in Jerusalem. Athaliah even surpassed her mother in cruelty and bloodthirstiness. As soon as she learned of the death of her son Ahaziah, she ordered her faithful guardsmen to kill every member of the house of David who was left in Jerusalem, and she struck such terror into the hearts of the people that none dared resist her. She erected an image of Baal, as well as obelisks and altars in honor of the new cult, and appointed a high priest, Mattan by name, as well

as numerous subordinate priests. She did not dare, it seems, to defile Solomon's temple on Mount Moriah with images of Baal; but she very likely interrupted its services, and she seems to have placed her mercenaries and bodyguards as sentinels at the temple gate to prevent anyone from entering it. Athaliah ruled six years (887-881) by sheer force, and the leading families of Judah probably belonged to her party. Only the high priest Jehoiada, a brother-in-law of the murdered king, remained loyal to the old religion and to the house of David. While Athaliah was engaged in annihilating the members of the royal family, his wife Jehosheba, a sister of the late king, succeeded in rescuing Joash, the one-year-old son of her brother, and in hiding him with his nurse in one of the chambers of the temple which served as sleeping quarters for the Levites. Here the royal child was reared by his aunt in the utmost secrecy, and under the protection of the priests and Levites who remained loyal to Jehoiada. The very helplessness of the last survivor of the house of David seems to have aroused the deepest sympathy of the priests, and none betrayed the secret. During the six years that Athaliah was lording it with a high hand, Jehoiada succeeded in winning over to his side the queen's mercenaries (Kari) and her body guard, gradually admitted them into the secret of the existence of the young prince, and, with their help, elaborated secret plans for a revolution as well as for a restoration. On a certain Sabbath he posted guards at the entrance of the temple with orders to strike down anyone who crossed the limits of the outer court with hostile intentions, while a division of the troops, with drawn swords, took its position within to guard the king against any attack. Jehoiada then invited the people also within the outer court, brought the royal child forth

from the chamber wherein he had been secreted, put the crown on his head, anointed him as king, and placed him on the columnar seat assigned to the kings in the temple court. The trumpets were blown, the troops clashed their arms, the people clapped their hands and shouted: "Long live King Joash!" As soon as the noise reached the palace, Athaliah rushed to the temple. Realizing what had happened, she tore her garments, and shrieked: "Conspiracy! Conspiracy!" Her own officers seized her, led her outside of the temple court, and put an end to her. Thus, the last member of the house of Omri met as shameful a death as her mother did. The close alliance with Tyre brought little good to either kingdom. Athaliah seemed to have but few adherents and still fewer friends. The priests of Baal also fell victims to the wrath of the people.

Jehoiada, who was the leading figure in the successful revolution, utilized the joyous mood of the king and of the people to impress upon them the evil result of idolatry, and to arouse within them a feeling of loyalty to the God of their fathers. He called upon king and the people to take a solemn oath to remain faithful to their God, and to serve no idols, and sealed their promise with a covenant. He did even more in order to make the impression of this occasion firm and lasting. The knowledge of the Law of Moses was hitherto confined to the priests and Levites. The people were not familiar even with the decalog; the tablets containing these commandments were regarded as a sacred relic of olden days, and the Ark of the Covenant was looked upon rather as a means of protection. Jehoiada seemed to have acquainted the people with the contents of the Law, and to have read to them such passages thereof as were appropriate to the conditions then existing—the prohibition to intermarry

with heathen natives, the warning against idolatry with the evil results to which it would lead, and the commandments to destroy the idols, root and branch. The reading of such passages made a deep impression upon the listeners; they fitted the conditions of their own time so closely. Did not Omri, Ahab, and the kings of Judah violate these laws, with what sad results! The people, thereupon, destroyed the temple of Baal which Athaliah had erected, tore down the altars, broke the images, and annihilated everything connected with the Baal worship. After the renewed covenant with God was confirmed by the king and the people, Joash was led in triumph to the palace, and Jerusalem rejoiced.

It is strange that the prophet Elisha took little part in the political and religious revolution that occurred in Jerusalem and in Samaria in close succession. Though Jehu's revolution in Samaria was accomplished at his instigation, he himself kept in the background, and in the overthrow of Athaliah he took no part at all. Elisha seems to have devoted all his attentions to the formation of the prophetic schools that were to keep alive the fiery zeal of Elijah; but, unlike Elijah, he was not acknowledged by everyone as the prophetic leader. Unlike Elijah, also, he did not wear long hair, wherefore some of the youthful prophetic disciples called him "Baldhead" in scorn of this indication on his part that he regarded the Nazaritic life as of little value. He also differed from his master in that he did not lead a life of solitude, but sought the companionship of men. At first, under the Omrides, he, too, lived in retirement on Mount Carmel, whence he used to travel to and fro in the region of the Jordan among his disciples. Occasionally he sojourned in Shunem, in the house of a pious woman who placed the upper story of

her house at his disposal, where he rested and recuperated every now and then. Later, however, he settled in Samaria, and became known as the "Prophet of Samaria." Through his friendly intercourse with his fellowmen, he exerted a great influence; distinguished people came to consult him and to receive instructions from him. But he never appeared in Judah or Jerusalem.

After Joash had been firmly established on his throne, Jehoiada turned his attentions to the Temple which had been neglected during Athaliah's reign. Jehoiada urged upon the king the necessity of repairing the breaches in the walls, and other damages. As there were no available funds for that purpose, since Athaliah had undoubtedly used the temple treasures for the maintenance of the cult of Baal, the king ordered the priests to collect funds among their acquaintances with which to make the necessary temple repairs. However, because the response was not generous enough, or because the priests used the money for private purposes, the king ordered Jehoiada to make an appeal directly to the people (about 864). A chest with a slit in it was placed in the temple court, in which the people were to deposit their voluntary contributions. The high priest probably read to the people from the scroll of Moses of the example of generosity set before them by their forefathers in building the tabernacle. The people responded willingly, and the necessary repairs were soon made. The high-priesthood which had hitherto been a subordinate office, had, under Jehoiada, assumed a dignity of equal importance with that of the kingship, owing to the great services which the high priest had rendered the king. As long as Jehoiada lived Joash gave him implicit obedience, and consulted him on all matters of state, and when he died he was honored by a burial in the royal

tombs of the City of David. The inevitable conflict between the high-priesthood and the kingship broke out soon after Jehoiada's death. For some reason, Joash ordered the death, by starvation, of Jehoiada's son and successor, Zechariah, who, it is said, died with the words: "May God see and avenge my death."

With the destruction of the house of Omri both in Israel and in Judah, internal quiet was restored in both kingdoms. The worship of Baal had been banished from both nations, though the people of Judah continued to sacrifice in private, sacred high places, and the people of Israel worshipped the God of Israel under the symbol of the sacred bull as introduced by Jeroboam. But both countries suffered humiliation from without. Hazael of Damascus overran the northern kingdom, captured fortified cities, killed men and women and children with the utmost brutality, conquered the entire possessions of the tribes of Manasseh, Gad and Reuben from the mountain of Bashan to the river Arnon, and reduced the inhabitants to servitude. King Mesha of Moab who had an old grievance against Israel, joined forces with Hazael, and Jehu seemed powerless. Under Jehu's son Joahaz (859-845), conditions were even worse. Hazael and his son Ben Hadad III so weakened the power of Israel that only ten thousand foot soldiers, fifty horsemen, and ten war chariots were left in the country. The Arameans made frequent incursions into Israel, and not only plundered, but captured men and women and sold them into slavery. Joahaz seems to have made a humiliating peace with his conqueror. It was only under the Israelitish king Joash (845-830) that the power of Damascus was gradually broken, as a result probably of the hostile attitude assumed by the Hittites on the Euphrates and by

the kings of Egypt who were jealous of the growing strength of the Arameans.

Amaziah, king of Judah, son of Joash who was murdered as a result of a conspiracy (about 843), took advantage of the weakness of the Arameans to reconquer Edom. Ben Hadad had ever protected Moab, Ammon, and Edom who were hostile to Israel or to Judah. As a consequence, Edom had broken loose from Judah and made herself independent for fifty years. One of the kings of Edom had built a new capital on top of the rocky Mount Seir, four thousand feet above sea level, and in this Rock City (Sela, Petra), he felt himself secure. Now that Ben Hadad was powerless, Amaziah made war upon Edom, met the enemy not far from the Dead Sea, routed him completely and captured Sela. Amaziah felt elated over his victory, but his overweening pride proved disastrous to himself and to his people.

The warm friendship existing between Israel and Judah during the reign of the house of Omri had cooled off under Jehu and his successors; and between Joash of Israel and Amaziah of Judah it came to an open rupture. In the pride of his victory over Edom, Amaziah formed the ambition to conquer Israel also, under the pretext, it seems, that Joash had refused to give his daughter in marriage to Amaziah's son. Joash replied scornfully: "The thorn sent unto the cedar of Lebanon, saying, 'Give me thy daughter to wife.' The wild beasts of Lebanon were turned loose and trampled the thorn under foot. Because thou hast conquered Edom thou art become proud. Keep thy glory and stay home. Why wilt thou invite misfortune upon thyself and thy people?" Amaziah insisted upon war, and the armies met on the border at Beth-shemesh. The Army of Judah was completely defeated; Amaziah was taken prisoner, and it was due solely

to Joash's generosity that he did not annex Judah to his own kingdom. Joash contented himself with demolishing the northern wall of Jerusalem, and with plundering the city and the temple. Amaziah was restored to his throne, but had to give hostages to Joash. The generosity of Joash may have been due to the influence of Elisha or his disciples whom that king frequently consulted. After the death of Joash (about 830), Amaziah reigned fifteen years longer (830-816), but was not happy.

Jeroboam II, son of Joash, more warlike than his predecessors, succeeded in extending his kingdom almost to the original limits under David. He reigned more than sixty years (830-769); and while the details of his warfare are not known, the resulting expansion of his kingdom indicates its success. He seems to have humbled the Arameans, the bitterest enemy of Israel since the days of Ahab. The boundaries of Israel extended from the road leading to Hamath in the north, to the Dead Sea in the south. He seems to have reconquered Moab and to have annexed it to his kingdom. In his wars against the Arameans he was encouraged by the prophet Jonah, son of Amittai, of the city of Gath-hepher in Zebulun. Amaziah, on the other hand, led a humiliating life in Jerusalem. He dared not rebuild his fortifications without the permission of the king of Israel, and was not in a condition to make war. The princes of Judah finally formed a conspiracy against him, and he fell, like his father, by the hands of an assassin, the third king of Judah to suffer such a fate.

A period of anarchy followed the death of Amaziah. Azariah (shortened into Uzziah), his only son, was a mere child; the conspirators who had murdered the king refused to give up the reins of government, and the enemies that surrounded Judah on all sides took advantage of her helplessness.

The Edomites, supported by Egypt, entered Jerusalem, led many people captive and sold them into slavery. A portion of Judah seems to have been partitioned between the Edomites and the Egyptians. The kingdom of Israel remained indifferent to the misfortune of Judah, and so was Tyre. The Philistines committed twofold atrocities upon the Judahns. Those who sought protection among them they delivered to the Edomites, and the captured boys and girls whom they bought from the soldiers in exchange for wine and harlots they sold again to the Ionians who were then competing for the slave trade with the Phoenicians. It seemed at that time (815-805) as though the kingdom of Judah was about to perish together with the house of David. The first dispersion of the Judahns in far-away countries whither they were sold as slaves by the Ionians began at that time; and these slaves, among whom were many noble youths and beautiful maidens, may have sown the seeds of a higher conception of God and of a loftier morality among the nations of the west in whose midst they were forced to live.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST KINGS OF ISRAEL AND THE FALL OF SAMARIA

(887-720)

The condition of Judah after the death of Amaziah was so deplorable that a contemporary prophet (Amos) referred to it as the "fallen hut of David," and exclaimed often: "How should Jacob be able to endure since he is so small?" (Amos 7:2). But Judah soon recovered, and rose again to considerable power. To remove the anarchy from its midst, the people rose to a man against the princes who murdered the king, and called his young son Azariah or Uzziah to the throne (805). The sixteen-year-old king Azariah or Uzziah, who enjoyed a long reign (805-755) like his contemporary Jeroboam II, possessed courage and determination, and these enabled him to build up again the fallen hut of David. His first care was to bring his father's body from Lachish, where he had been murdered, to Jerusalem to be interred in the royal vaults. It is not stated whether he punished his father's murderers. He next turned his attention towards healing the deep wounds of his country; and this was not an easy matter. For not only was he sur-

rounded by enemies within and without his country, but even nature seemed to conspire against him and his people. An earthquake took place in his time which destroyed many houses and cities, and threw the people into a fearful panic; and the accompanying phenomena added to the general terror. The sun was darkened by a heavy fog; the darkness was fitfully broken by flashes of lightning; the moon and the stars seemed to hide their light; the roaring of the sea could be heard from far away. The horror of the earthquake created all the more consternation since a prophet had foretold its coming two years before in the name of God. The fulfillment of the prophecy inspired everyone with fear; it seemed as though the end of the world had come. Hardly was this terror over, when a drought came. The fields were wasted, the grass withered, the reservoirs gave out, the sun burned like fire, and turned pasture and garden into a wilderness. In vain people went from town to town in search of water. In addition, locusts came from the lava regions of the Hauran Mountains where they could find no food, crossed the Jordan in swarms, and devoured in Israel and Judah what little the drought had spared. The vine, fig, palm, pomegranate and apple trees were suddenly stripped bare. This visitation was repeated several years in succession, and caused wide-spread misery. The people of Judah were plunged in despair; it seemed as though God had forsaken his land, his people, and his temple. Public mourning and processions were held in the hope of averting the catastrophe. The prophet Joel, son of Pethuel, contributed not a little towards raising the drooping spirits of the people by his vigorous and penetrating public addresses.

As soon as these calamities were over, the young King Uzziah took advantage of the improved conditions to chastise the enemies of Judah. He

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By Doré

avenged himself on the Edomites who had devastated the country; then he conquered and restored to Judah the city of Elath, at the head of the Arabian Gulf, and was thus enabled to resume the profitable maritime commerce with Arabia and Ophir (India). He chastised the Philistines who had shown such fiendish hatred of Judah, and had delivered over to the Edomites the refugees who sought their protection. He annexed a portion of Philistine territory to his own kingdom, and built strongholds therein. He then concentrated all his efforts upon the fortification of Jerusalem. He restored even more strongly the northern wall which had been broken down for a distance of four hundred cubits by King Joash of Israel. On three sides Uzziah erected towers one hundred and fifty feet high, and on the towers and pinnacles he placed engines that could hurl heavy stones at great distances. Uzziah displayed special zeal in the matter of military equipments. His soldiers were provided with shields, coats of mail, and spears, and he again introduced Egyptian horses and war chariots as in the days of Solomon. As a consequence, prosperity returned to Jerusalem and Judah. "The land was filled with gold and silver and there was no end to its treasures; and it was filled with horses and there was no end to its war chariots" (Is. 2:8). His military equipments and his wealth inspired his neighbors with respect for his country. Uzziah's name was known even in Egypt.

The northern kingdom attained an even greater degree of power under Jeroboam II. In the course of his long reign he succeeded in capturing Damascus, and penetrated as far north as Hamath which he likewise captured and which became tributary to him. In consequence of Jeroboam's commercial activities Samaria enjoyed a high degree of pros-

perity. The luxurious style of living on the part of the king and the nobles, the houses built out of solid stone blocks ornamented with ivory, and the ivory couches which were a common sight, would bring one back to the days of Solomon and would make him forget that there were two kings and two kingdoms. As a result, however, of this very great prosperity, certain evils sprang up in both kingdoms, and in the northern even more than in the southern, which were soon to put an end to these happy and prosperous days. In Israel the bull-worship became more widely disseminated. Not alone in Dan and Bethel, but in Samaria and in Gilgal the images of the sacred bulls were erected. Jeroboam made Bethel the principal sanctuary, and there a sort of a high priest by name of Amaziah officiated. The worship of Baal was also introduced again; and, in addition to the corruption and vice which followed in its train, there developed an inordinate lust after riches. The rich plied usurious trades, and often sold their debtors or their debtor's children into slavery if they were unable to pay their debts. If the poor unfortunates appealed to the judges they could get no satisfaction, for the judges were either accomplices or were silenced by bribes. The treasure thus accumulated by means of usury, false weights and measures, and bribery, the rich squandered in riotous living. The prophet Amos describes the luxurious life of the rich in these impressive words: "They lie upon beds of ivory, and are stretched out upon their couches, and eat lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the midst of the stall; and drink wine out of bowls, and anoint themselves with the costliest of ointments" (Amos. 6:4-6). Their wives urged them on in their iniquities, even surpassed them in their cruelty to the poor, and called upon their husbands: "Bring, we want to drink."

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DAMASCUS

This immorality and wickedness of the rich and the nobles were not, however, taken as a matter of course. There were still left representatives of justice, morality, and pure religion who constantly raised their voices in protest against the prevailing vice and corruption; and though they appeared in rather unpretentious garb, they succeeded in getting a hearing. Almost a century had passed since Elijah in his flowing hair denounced Ahab and Jezebel for their misdoings; but the prophetic school which he had founded preserved his spirit and his zeal. The youth of the land, which, as a rule, is more susceptible to ideal endeavor, flocked to Elisha who continued Elijah's work, led a Nazaritic life, and zealously opposed the religious perversity, the luxury, and the immorality. In public assemblies, in the presence of the king and the nobles, these young men, the embodiment of the better conscience, protested against the injustice of the rich and pleaded for the poor. Whether it was due to their great numbers, or to the fact that some of these young prophets themselves belonged to some of the most prominent and influential families, the fact remains that these young men were not molested. The voluptuaries may have tried to force wine upon the Nazarites, or prevent them from delivering their messages; they hated these censors, but did not persecute them.

Amos of Tekoa, the first of the great poetic prophets who combined depth of thought with symmetrical form, took advantage of the freedom of speech permitted in Israel to tell the truth to the nobles and the people in keen words. He did not belong to any prophetic guild, and wore no distinguishing garb, but was a simple herdman, and a planter of sycamore trees that grew in abundance in the plain (Shephelah). While tending his flock the prophetic spirit came upon him with such irre-

sistible force that he could not but deliver his message in public. The prophetic spirit led him to Bethel, where, at the royal sanctuary, and in the temporary capital of Jeroboam II, he was to reprimand the people for their perverseness and vices, and point out to them the consequences of their misdeeds. It must have created some sensation in Bethel that a man who, by his dress, looked like a shepherd should dare address the people; and there must also have existed a high degree of culture in Samaria when a shepherd was able to deliver beautifully worded and poetic orations, and the people could understand them. Was Amos the first to introduce this entirely new species of eloquence? The prophets from Samuel to Amos delivered their messages in plain, prosaic words, employing a parable, at most, to bring a lesson home. The orations of Amos and his successors combine the flow and the lucidity of prose with the rhythm and euphony of poetry. The poetic strain was heightened by means of figures and imagery. The prophetic addresses may be described as a species of beautifully formed poetic eloquence. Amos's speeches betrayed his calling; he employed figures drawn from pastoral life. One could easily discern that the speaker had often heard the roaring of the lion, and that he had watched the starry skies at night. But these peculiarities only added to the charm of his orations.

Amos's prophetic career began at Bethel prior to the earthquake which he foretold in a prophetic vision. When Amos saw that that catastrophe did not lead the people to the repentance which he expected, he announced in harsher words the coming of an awful day when "the city that went forth a thousand shall have an hundred left, and that which went forth an hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel . . . Forasmuch, therefore, as

your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat . . . Ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards but ye shall not drink wine of them" (Amos 5:3, 11). To those who considered themselves invulnerable, relying upon their wealth, or their false piety, and made sport of the prophet's threats, Amos spoke in even harsher tones of the day of the Lord which, to them, shall be "darkness and not light; even very dark with no brightness in it." (Ibib. 5:20).

The bold words of the prophet directed even against the royal house, aroused the anger of Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel. He called the king's attention to Amos's utterances, and addressed the prophet in the name of the king: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophecy there; but prophecy not again at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." Amos, however, did not permit himself to be stopped by this interruption, and continued: "I am not a prophet, nor am I a prophetic disciple; I am a herdman, and a pincher of sycamore fruit. But the Lord commanded me: 'Go, prophecy unto my people Israel' " (Ibid. 7:12-13). He completed his threats in the strongest terms.

Towards the kingdom of Judah Amos's tone was much milder. In a vision in which he foresaw the troubles that would befall that kingdom, he interceded with God: "O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small" (Amos 7:2). The weakness of Judah after the death of Amaziah aroused the prophet's sympathies, and he would not discourage the people still further. Amos was convinced that salvation for the future will come out of Judah, and he prophesied the future union of the tribes under the house of David. These were the last gladsome words of

the great prophet of Tekoa. Nothing is known of his life and of his death.

Of Joel, son of Pethuel, a prophet who lived in Jerusalem probably at the same time, even less or nothing is known. Most prophets came out of the dark and retired into the dark without leaving a trace of their personality. Joel made his appearance at the time when Judah was plunged into the greatest despair owing to successive misfortunes caused by the earthquake, the drought, the locusts, and the humiliations heaped upon the country by the hostile neighbors. The people of Jerusalem and of Judah were fasting and wailing, wore mourners' garb, and prayed in the temple with moans and tears that God might avert the calamities that had befallen them. In this period of despair, Joel's mission was not to rebuke but to encourage, to strengthen the drooping spirits. The power of his eloquence was directed to convince the people that God had not forsaken them, that Zion was his holy mountain still, that he was long suffering and merciful and that he would remove the evil even without sacrifice and fasting. Joel also foretold a political revolution. The captives whom the Philistines and the Tyrians had sold to the Ioanians would return; God will pass a severe judgment "in the vale of Decision," in the valley of Jehosaphat, over the peoples who treated them so cruelly, when He cometh to judge the nations, "Judah will dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (Joel 4:20). A higher moral order will then prevail. Every creature will then be filled with the divine, prophetic spirit: "I will pour my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour my spirit" (Joel 3:1).

The third prophet of the time of Jeroboam II and Uzziah was Hosea, son of Beeri, who appeared probably in Bethel or Samaria. While Amos rebuked the people only for their moral perversities, Hosea denounced them especially for their idolatry. The introduction of the Baal cult into Israel Hosea described under the figure of a faithless wife who runs after her paramours under the mistaken notion that it was the lover, Baal, and not God who was supplying her with the corn, wine, gold and silver which she was squandering upon the idol. But God will deprive her of all these things, and leave her nothing even with which to cover her nakedness. In her trouble she will realize her mistakes and will say: "I will return unto my first husband for then it was better with me than now" (Hos. 2:9). The prophet then describes the return. She will call him "my husband," and not my "master," for she will despise the very name of "master" (Baal). God will reconcile himself with his repentant wife: "I will betroth thee unto Me forever, yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercy; I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord" (Ib. 2:21). God will again shower his mercies upon his reconciled wife, the nation, even as in the days of her youth, the days of the departure from Egypt. Hosea also announced, and even more emphatically, the future reunion of all the tribes under the sceptre of David. When he spoke of the glorious future awaiting Israel he made it plain that he was referring to a distant period of time. In another prophecy he stated that many evil days would pass before the return and the reconciliation of Israel will have been brought about.

The perversities of the one kingdom and the misfortune of the other gave birth to that prophetic

eloquence which was to exert an influence of far-reaching import. The crimes of Ahab and Jezebel produced an Elijah, and the misdeeds of Jeroboam II and of his nobles led Amos to give up his pastoral life, and Hosea to shake off his obscurity in order to proclaim in fascinating form the thoughts which stirred within them. Their griefs and their hopes, their thoughts and their convictions became the common property of an ever widening circle, and acted as an impelling and ennobling force. Prophetic disciples listened eagerly to their words, imprinted them in their memory or preserved them in writing. These formed the beginning of that prophetic literature which was later on to awaken the nations of the earth out of their dullness. One of these prophets, Joel or Hosea, portrayed a picture of an ideal future to which the noblest spirits of all times have clung and are still clinging: "In the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come, and say: 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For the Law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:1-3). This sublime picture of an everlasting peace to be established by the Law that cometh forth from Zion, and which is to transform instruments of war into implements of fruitful activity, eclipses

all the creations of art that ever appealed to the eye and the mind of man.

The hostile attitude of Amos and Hosea towards the house of Jehu produced a political effect similar to that which Elisha brought upon the house of Omri. Jeroboam II did, indeed, die in peace at an advanced age after a long and prosperous reign, but his son Zechariah was murdered six months after he ascended the throne (769) by Shallum, the son of Jabesh. The conspirator annihilated the entire family of Jeroboam II just as Jehu did to the house of Omri, and made himself king in Samaria. His reign lasted only one month when he, in turn, was murdered by Menahem son of Gadi of Tirzah, the former capital. Samaria surrendered to Menahem without resistance. The city of Tappuah which refused to surrender he besieged and captured, and ruthlessly put to the sword the entire population, men, women and children. Such a cruel man could not, of course, gain the affection of the people. It seems, though, that Menahem abolished the Baal cult, while the bull-worship remained. During his reign a powerful empire appeared on the horizon that was destined to put an end to the House of Israel.

Conditions in Judah were not much brighter, either. Internal dissensions occurred under Uzziah over which a veil of obscurity was purposely thrown, it seems. Uzziah was too much absorbed at first in increasing his military strength to pay much attention to spiritual matters. Later on a quarrel broke out between him and the high priest Azariah, just at it did between Joash and Zechariah. The king wanted to assume also the office of priest, and entered the Holy of Holies in the temple to offer incense on the altar. The priests of the house of Aaron protested vigorously against such defilement of the Sanctuary, and the high priest

Azariah accompanied by eighty determined priests, confronted the king with the words: "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God" (II Chr. 26:18). What happened then is wrapped in mystery. As Uzziah was afflicted in his last years with an incurable leprosy which compelled him to live in isolation for the rest of his days, the people regarded that loathsome disease as a divine punishment for daring to assume the functions of the priesthood. The priesthood came out victorious from its struggle with the kingship, though another spiritual power, that of prophecy, was soon to declare war both upon a self-seeking priesthood and upon an arrogant kingship. Jotham assumed the regency during his father's isolation. The tyrant Menahem still ruled with an iron hand in Samaria. Both kingdoms continued in their usual course without noticing the thick cloud that was gathering on the horizon and that was to involve them both in ruin.

Out of the north, of the regions of the Euphrates and the Tigris, there issued forth a new power —the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians were a powerful race, tempered to hard campaigns by their kings who were hungry after conquests. They had an abundance of horses from the Armenian mountains, and their skilled horsemen could easily overcome the infantry arrayed against them. A Judahn prophet thus vividly describes them: "Behold, they come with speed, swiftly; none is weary or stumbles among them; none slumbers or sleeps; neither is the girdle of their loins loosened, nor is the latchet of their shoes broken; their arrows are sharp, their bows bent; their horses' hoofs are counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind; they roar like

lions, they lay hold of their prey, carry it safely away, and none shall deliver it" (Is. 5: 26-9). The kings of Assyria, as was the case among all nations of antiquary, with the exception of the Greeks and the Romans, were autocrats in the fullest sense of the word; and were the first to assume the pompous title of "King of Kings."

As soon as the Assyrians had extended their empire north, east, and west, they turned their attentions to the south where Phoenicia and Egypt with their wealth and splendor stretched out temptingly before them. Pul was the first Assyrian king to invade the land of Israel. The Assyrian army started from Hamath and Damascus, fell upon the cities of Gilead, and took their inhabitants captive. It then crossed the Jordan, and devastated the possessions of Zebulun and Naphtali. King Menahem dared not even resist, to such an extent did the internal disorders weaken him. As a matter of fact, his enemies tried to induce Pul to dethrone the hated tyrant, but Menahem hastened to the Assyrian conqueror, and offered him an enormous indemnity to leave him on his throne. Pul accepted the indemnity, and withdrew from Israel, taking his booty and his captives with him. Menahem, however, did not pay his ransom out of his private treasure, but forced each wealthy man to contribute for that purpose fifty shekels (about $30.00), a considerable sum for those days.

This was the beginning of the end. Amos's prophecy of fifty years ago that a far-distant nation would lead Israel captive beyond Damascus, was partly fulfilled. The first Israelites were transplanted to the region of the Tigris or some other portion of the vast Assyrian domain. To all appearances, the kingdom of Israel was still intact. The country still contained sixty thousand men of

wealth* who were able to contribute to the heavy tax of the Assyrians' indemnity; and Menahem still had horsemen, military equipment and fortifications on which he could rely. But the internal dissensions were gradually undermining the foundation of the nation; old age was coming, to use a prophetic phrase. When the cruel Menahem died, his son Pekahaiah was able to hold the throne for less than two years (757-756). Pekah, son of Remaliah, his own charioteer, organized a conspiracy against him, murdered him in his own palace in Samaria (756), and ascended the throne himself. Pekah, last king but one of Israel (755-736), was a determined, reckless and violent man, and oppressed his people even more than his predecessors. A prophet characterized him as a "silly shepherd," who "does not visit those that are cut off, who does not seek the young ones, nor does he heal that which is broken; nor feed that which standeth still; but he eats the flesh of the fat, and tears their claws to pieces" (Zech. 11: 15-16). To protect himself from the Assyrians, he joined the confederacy of the neighboring kingdoms that were to present a united front to the common enemy. The leading spirit in this movement was probably Damascus which again had a king (Rezin) and which was the first to be exposed to the impetuosity of an Assyrian invasion.

Jotham, king of Judah (754-739) was also induced to join the confederacy. A man of mediocre abilities, he followed in the footsteps of his father. Outwardly the country remained in the powerful position which Uzziah established; it had horse-

*The total ransom amounted to one thousand talents (equal to one million, eight hundred thousand dollars). As the talent contained three thousand shekels, and as each "man of power," or wealthy man, was taxed fifty shekels, there must have been sixty thousand men who contributed to the ransom. (See II Kings, 15:19-20.) Rab.

men, war chariots, the Tarshish fleet that plied on the Red Sea, wealth and splendor. Jotham further fortified Jerusalem especially on the east side where the temple stood, as well as Mount Moriah and its extensions, and erected citadels and towers on the mountains of Judah. Jotham also made an alliance with king Pekah of Israel; but his friendship with Israel on the one side, and the rise of a pretentious nobility in Judah on the other, proved disastrous to that country. During Uzziah's sickness and Jotham's regency several prominent families raised themselves to such a position of influence that they almost overshadowed the king. The "Princes of Judah" held the power in their own hands, and decided upon the most important questions of state. The steward of the palace, bearing the title of the "Governor of the Court" (Sochen), also attained to such a power that the king only reigned but did not rule. The "elders," or the heads of the prominent families, in league with the "Governor of the palace," lorded it with a high hand in their respective spheres, paying little attention to the king's commands. As is the case with all oligarchies, vice and corruption followed. Under the least pretext, the nobles robbed their weaker neighbors of their houses and fields; and the judges, being either bribed or accomplices, turned a deaf ear to the cry for justice raised by their victims. As a result, there developed that dangerous social condition: enormous wealth on the one side and extreme poverty on the other side, with all the unhealthy consequences which such a contrast produces. The poor, reduced almost to slavery, were forced to toil on the extensive estates of the princes and the elders; and these did not hesitate to make slaves out of the children of their impoverished debtors who were unable to meet their obligations. To this corruption were

added the vices of drunkenness and unchastity. The friendship of the nobles of Judah with those of Israel led the former to imitate the latter. In Israel, particularly in the capital Samaria, unbridled licentiousness was not condemned but was in a measure sanctified and formed a part of religious worship. Immorality was part and parcel of the Baal and Astarte cults with their multitudes of temple prostitutes; and the princes of Judah introduced these cults in Jerusalem just because they fostered licentiousness. The worship at the temple of Jerusalem was recognized officially; the king worshipped there, and the priests of Aaron officiated there; but this did not prevent the nobles from indulging in the cult of Baal privately. The close friendship between Judah and Israel brought about the result that lewd idolatry, debauchery, drunkenness, arrogance and scorn for justice became common in both kingdoms.

But however degenerate the nobles and princes had become, their degeneracy was not regarded as a lawful condition, as a prerogative to which they were legally entitled. Among the Israelites, wrong could never be regarded as right; and there were ever men among them who denounced in a mighty voice the disregard for righteousness, and the degradation of the poor; who insisted upon justice and morality, and who defended the weak against the strong with all the power of their eloquence. And just at this time, in the period of the degeneracy under Jotham and Pekah, there appeared several men of God who protested against the corruption of the great in words that burned. They formed the third generation of great prophets, after Elijah and Elisha, and Amos and Hosea.

The greatest of these prophets was Isaiah, son of Amoz, of Jerusalem. With the contemporary prophets Zechariah I (son of Berechiah), Hosea

II, and Micah II (of Moresheth), he fearlessly and openly denounced the sins, the perverseness and the vice then prevailing. But he surpassed his contemporaries in depth of thought, grace of form, loftiness of poetic expression, beauty of imagery and clearness of prophetic vision. Little is known of the circumstances of Isaiah's life. His youth seems to have been spent in the circle of the pleasure-loving nobility; he betrays a close familarity with the trumpery and vanity of the women of his day. Later he married a woman who was herself a prophetess. Like Elijah, he made his prophetic calling the main object of his life; and he wore the distinctive prophetic garb, a cloak of goat's skin. All his efforts were devoted to the task of exposing wickedness, of admonishing the people, and of holding up before them a glorious ideal of the future. He gave his sons symbolic names which were to serve as a sign and a testimony to his predictions. One he named "Shear Jashub" (the remnant will return) as an indication that only a remnant will return to God, and called the other "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" (it will quickly become booty), as a sign that two dangerous enemies of Judah will soon fall a prey to Assyria and thus become harmless. For more than forty years (755-710) he continued his great work, devotedly, tirelessly, firmly and fearlessly. In the hours of danger when everyone, including the king and the princes, was in despair, he walked with calm assurance, and inspired everyone with hope and with courage.

Isaiah made his first public appearance in the year of King Uzziah's death (755). He may have been about thirty years of age, and it was possibly from the temple mount that he announced his first vision in which he was appointed to the office of prophet. He said that he saw Yahveh sitting on his throne surrounded by Seraphim, one of whom

touched him on the lips with a live coal as an indication that he was cleansed from his sins. He then heard the voice of Yahveh saying: "Whom shall I send and who will go?" and he replied: "Here am I, send me!" Yahveh then charged him with this message: "Go and tell the people: 'Hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.'" To the prophet's inquiry: "Lord, how long?" Yahveh replied: "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitants, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. Even if there be a tenth in it, it shall also be consumed; but like an oak and a terebinth whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so shall the holy seed be the substance thereof" (of the land) (Is. 6: 9-13).

In his first message Isaiah only hinted in general terms of the corruption of the nobility; but in another address he goes into details and holds up before the "princes of Judah" a mirror of their folly and their infamy. He denounces their infatuation with idolatry, their discarding of justice, their robberies and their lust, and scorns especially the pride, the luxuriousness and the indecencies of the women of the nobility: "The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of his people and the princes thereof, for you have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that he beat My people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor?" (Ib. 3:15). The cause of these evils Isaiah discerned in the desire for pleasure and the concupiscence of the women who urged on the

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men, the princes of Judah, to procure the means for satisfying their pleasures by illicit gains, robbery, and the enslavement of their weak neighbors. "Women rule over my people," exclaims the prophet, by their coquetry, ostentatious dress, and seductive arts: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts" (Ib. 16-17). With a surprising knowledge of detail, the prophet then proceeds to describe the love of ostentation of the daughters of Zion, the tinkling ornaments about their feet, their cauls, their round tires like the moon, the chains, bracelets, mufflers, bonnets, the ornaments of their legs, the headbands, the tablets, the earrings, the rings, nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, the mantles, the wimples, the crisping pins, the glasses, the fine linen, the hoods, and the veils" (Ib. 18-23). For a moment the prophet turns away from his sad reflections to dwell upon the future glory of Zion when "the Lord will create, upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies, a pillar of cloud and smoke by day, and of a shining flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence" (Ib. 4:5); then he returns to his main theme.

These powerful orations of Isaiah, masterly in content and form, did not have an immediate effect. An aristocracy is not easily improved; it scorns contemptuously the threats of evil impending over the future. But Isaiah did not speak in vain; his words exerted an influence upon circles to whom they were not addressed; they proved effective in later times also. They aroused the dormant con-

science as though with a voice of thunder. Moreover, Isaiah did not content himself with mere denunciation of vice; but held up a constructive ideal of life by which humanity might obtain its salvation: A king shall not judge "after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears . . ." (Ib. 11:3). "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil: he shall dwell on high" (Ib. 33: 15-16). The lip service, the calling upon God with the mouth but not with the heart, Isaiah treated with the utmost contempt; and the offering of sacrifices without a heart-felt turning to God he regarded as mere hypocrisy: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifces unto Me?" saith the Lord. "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to offer before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot bear; away with inquity and solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to hear them." What does God demand of man? "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Ib. I: 11-17). In the contrast with the pleasure-seeking and the debauchery of the nobles, Isaiah takes as his model the simple, pastoral life which the patriarchs led in the days of old and which the Rechabites were still preserving

in his day; . . . "A man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; . . . for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter; for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land" (Ib. 7: 21-22). The conception of God as the basic principle of pure living and high thinking he regards as holiness, and he always designates God as the Holy One of Israel whose glory fills the whole universe.

Isaiah followed the example of Samuel and Elijah in grouping around himself a number of young men, to whom he imparted his spirit and who thus became his disciples and his spiritual children. Isaiah's disciples, unlike Elijah's, were characterized not by zeal, but rather by meekness, patience, and by absolute resignation to the will of God, and were, therefore, styled the "Meek," or the "Humble of the Land" (Anawim). Because they were poor, or had become impoverished by the rich, they called themselves "The Poor." These "Humble" and "Poor" of whom Isaiah speaks as his own children, formed a community of their own, and it was they whom Isaiah and his successors regarded as the nucleus that was to bring salvation to the entire nation. Among them were naturally many Levites who had been reduced by the priests to a subordinate position, almost bordering on slavery. Among these, again, there were many who possessed the gift of song, and they created a new species of psalms, especially distinguished by its tone of tenderness, which reflects the spirit of Isaiah, even if it were not all composed by his immediate disciples. This psalm literature became the consolation of millions of people in various ages when force, crime and hatred held sway. The singers of the circle of Levites who constantly lingered about the temple had no higher desire than to be able to linger there undis-

turbed and to sing the praises of God. This love of song raised the "Humble" far above the sorrows and tribulations of their day; and in the midst of the most trying crisis the burden of their song was faith in God, and resignation to His will.

Isaiah did not confine his prophecies to Judah, but lifted his prophetic gaze also over the two mighty empires of Egypt and Assyria. Egypt, the once powerful world-empire, was then in a condition of weakness. Under King Bocchoris of Sais, the empire was split up into small principalities (nomes), under petty chiefs who were warring with each other. Isaiah announced the rise of a powerful king who was to humble all these petty kings and make himself master of Egypt. As a matter of fact, the Ethiopian king Shabako, taking advantage of the internal dissentions in Egypt, made himself master of that country, took Bocchoris captive, and founded an Ethiopian dynasty in Egypt (about 740) which held power for half a century. Shabako then overran Judah, took many captives, and Jotham had to pay tribute to Egypt, just as Menahem had to Assyria. Israel and Judah that, under Jeroboam II and Uzziah had risen to power and splendor, had now virtually become vassal states, the one of Assyria, the other of Egypt, and formed the arena and the prize of the two gigantic empires of the northeast and the south that were ready to fall upon each other. In spite of the warning of the prophets who predicted these political upheavals beforehand, the people did not turn to God in their extremity, but continued to consult their household gods (Teraphim) and magicians.

To protest against these perversions there arose another prophet, Zechariah, son of Berechiah (or Zechariah I), seemingly also of Jerusalem. Though he did not possess the fervor and the

graceful eloquence of his contemporary Isaiah, he was none the less vigorous. He frequently employs the metaphor of shepherd and flock in speaking of the relations between king and people, and denounces the "foolish shepherd" who was mistreating his flock. In a tender mood he has a vision of the Arameans, the Syrians and even the Philistines acknowledging the God of Israel, after they had been purged of their crimes and arrogance. Encouragingly he predicts that God would reunite the house of Judah with the house of Ephraim, would bring back their captives from Egypt and Assyria and from the other lands where they had been dispersed, and would humble the pride of Assyria and Egypt. The prophet then recurs to the "foolish shepherd," referring to Pekah of Israel. God had appointed a shepherd over the people, and had given him two staves, one called Beauty (Mercy), and other Bond (Union). But since the people had rejected God, God had rejected them, had broken first the staff of Mercy, loosened the bond of union which He had made with all the tribes of Israel, and now He is about to break the second staff, the "Staff of Friendship," between Israel and Judah. God had appointed a foolish and merciless shepherd over the people; the people did not deserve a better one; but this shepherd who had neglected his flock is about to receive his condign chastisement.

The alliance between Judah and Israel which existed under Uzziah and Jotham actually came to an end upon the death of the latter king, as Zechariah had foretold. The cause of this breach of union is not definitely stated but was probably due to the fact that Jotham's son Ahaz (739-725), who succeeded his father, was a weakling who didn't know how to cope with the political situation confronting him. Ahaz was called upon to decide the momen-

tous question whether or not to join the confederacy formed by Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel, and probably also by the smaller neighboring states. The allies felt that only in such a strong union could they find safety against the attacks of Sabako of Egypt on the one hand, and against the encroachments of Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria on the other. They asked Ahaz to join the confederacy, and thus strengthen the common cause; for Tiglath-Pileser had already taken possession of Mesopotamia, and was descending on the Lebanon region to reconquer the territory which Pul had formerly reduced to a state of vassalage. After some hesitation Ahaz declined to join the confederacy. Thereupon, Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel declared war upon Judah with the avowed intention not only of dethroning Ahaz but even of putting an end to the house of David, and of placing Ben-Tabel, one of their allies, upon the throne of Judah. To aggravate the situation, Jerusalem itself was divided into two parties: one party, with the princes at its head, favored an alliance with the confederacy in order to oppose Assyria; while the better element, under the leadership of the prophets, remained loyal to Ahaz out of their faithfulness to the house of David. The allied armies of Rezin and Pekah overran the open country of Judah, and took many captives. A part of the Aramean army made an incursion into Edom, wrested that country from Judah, turned over to the Edomites the important seaport of Elath, and expelled all the Judahns who had settled there since the days of Solomon or Amaziah. The allied armies then marched upon Jerusalem, and made preparations to besiege it. In this extremity Ahaz took a desperate step. Secretly, he sent an embassy to Tiglath-Pileser to ask his aid against the besieging confederacy, and to offer his own submission and that of

his country to Assyria. This step which might afford momentary relief was fraught with danger for the future. The Assyrians, like the Romans later on, used to lay such a firm grasp on their allies and confederates that they reduced them to ignominious servitude. Moreover, Egypt could not look calmly upon this extension of the power of Assyria up to her very border, and Judah would thus inevitably become the battlefield of the armies of the two rival powers. Isaiah who realized these dangers warned Ahaz, and urged him to be patient. But Ahaz was short-sighted; he looked only for immediate relief, and paid for it with the independence of his country. Tiglath-Pileser descended upon the countries of the confederates, who hurriedly raised the siege of Jerusalem in consequence. He conquered the entire kingdom of Aram, and put Rezin to death. Damascus was settled by Assyrians, thus becoming a thoroughly Assyrian city, and the former kingdom of Aram assumed the name of Assyria, shortened into Syria. From Damascus Tiglath-Pileser marched upon Israel, captured all the fortified mountain cities, the region of the sea and of the Jordan, and conquered the territory of the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, and of the Danites who had settled at the source of the Jordan and at the foot of Hermon. Pekah submitted without resistance. For this Tiglath-Pileser spared his life, but the prisoners whom he had taken among the conquered tribes he carried into captivity (about 738), and transplanted them in various regions of his extensive empire. The prophecy of Amos, foretold two generations before, was fulfilled in part. The kingdom of Israel, reduced to half its former limits, became a vassal of Assyria, and had to pay tribute annually to the foreign conqueror. The "foolish shepherd" Pekah, whose folly caused this

disaster, did not survive it long. A conspiracy was formed against him, and he was murdered by Hoshea, son of Elah (about 736), after an ignominious reign of twenty years.

In the kingdom of Judah also a far-reaching change took place. Ahaz, who was compelled to go to Damascus to offer homage to Tiglath-Pileser as his vassal, instead of feeling humiliated returned in a mood of insolence as a great admirer of the Assyrians, bent upon imitating them. He ordered the high priest Uriah to erect an altar in Jerusalem after the model of an Assyrian altar which he saw in Damascus; and, after the example of the Assyrian kings, he decided to act as a priest himself. He also introduced the sun and moon worship in Jerusalem, and at the entrance of the temple there was probably erected an image of the sun-god to whom horses and chariots were dedicated. On the roof of his palace altars were built in honor of the five great planets which are visible to the naked eye only at night; and on every hill and high place other shrines were erected. Outside of those, other Assyrian elements were brought by him into Judah. The courtiers learned the Assyrian language which resembled the Aramean in order to understand the language of their over-lord. Some of the Assyrian importations of Ahaz were also beneficial. Ahaz made the sun dial, a Chaldean invention, familiar in Jerusalem. It was placed near the palace, and was named after Ahaz. He also improved the calendar, and brought into Judah many of the fine arts, notably that of mural decoration, in which the Assyrians excelled. Architecture in Jerusalem assumed a different character under Assyrian influences. But the pernicious imitations of Ahaz far outweighed the useful ones. He went so far as to introduce human sacrifices into Judah! likewise an imitation of an Assyrian cult. He erected

a fire-altar (Tophet) in the beautiful vale of Hinnom, or Ben Hinnom (named after its owner), on the southeast extension of the Vale of Kidron where the Brook of Siloam and other springs produce a luxurious vegetation; and on that altar he had one of his sons burned to death as a sacrifice to Moloch without paying any heed to the heartrending cries of the innocent child. It is self-evident that the perversions of Ahaz were not without their influence upon the people. The princes of Judah welcomed these Assyrian innovations since they gave them free scope to indulge in the vices to which they had ever been inclined, and they took advantage of the king's weakness to practice their wonted injustice upon the people with impunity. The priests, from motives either of selfishness or of fear, likewise yielded to the king's perversions. One of the degenerate priests seems to have maintained that the Mosaic law, by its command that each first born male child should be dedicated to God, actually taught that such first born should be offered as a sacrifice by fire!

Meanwhile, political events followed their complicated course. In the kingdom of Samaria, which could no longer be called the kingdom of the ten tribes since the loss of the eastern and northern territories, the old wickedness and shortsightedness continued as heretofore. The wounds which the Assyrians had inflicted upon the kingdom did not humble the pride or curb the self-seeking of the nobles and the princes who did not seem to realize that the defeats they had suffered hitherto would lead to the final destruction of the nation, unless they exerted themselves manfully to prevent such a fate. Upon the death of Pekah at the hands of Hoshea, a period of anarchy followed which continued for nine years. Hoshea seems to have declined the crown, and the princes were too jealous

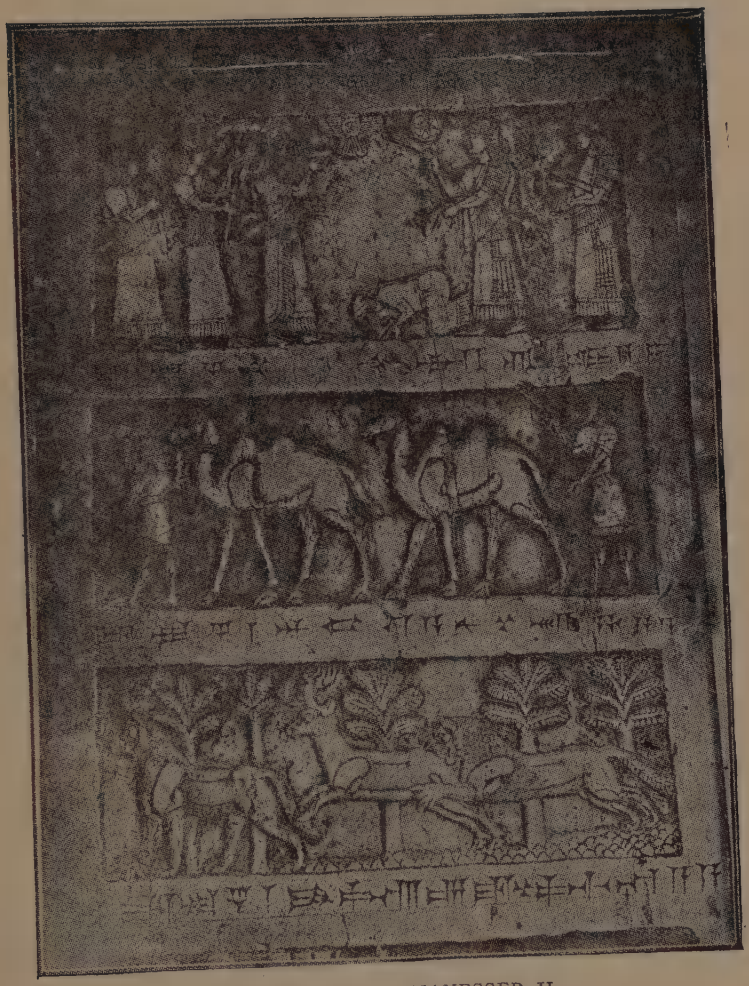
of each other to submit to one of their peers. If any one succeeded in seizing the reins of power in his hands for a short while, he was as quickly forced to yield them again. Regicide followed regicide. In these nine years of anarchy, vice and crime reigned without let or hindrance. Perjury, fraud, murder, robbery and adultery held high carnival, and innocent blood flowed freely. Prominent nobles organized themselves after the manner of the medieval robber barons: and from their ambush on Mount Gerizim near Shechem, on Mount Tabor in the north, and in Mizpah of the mountains of Gilead, fell upon wayfarers and caravans, and plundered and killed without mercy. In addition to the losses sustained by such depredations, the kingdom of Israel had to pay an annual tribute to Assyria—and Assyria could not be trifled with. It was folly to attempt to shake off the Assyrian yoke openly; though those who were at the head of the government did, indeed, maintain secret communications with Egypt in the hope of finally breaking with Assyria. The kingdom of Israel was thus placed in the dangerous position of playing a double part—of open submission to Assyria and of secret alliance with Egypt. A contemporary prophet refers to this double dealing of Samaria in these ironical words: "Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind; he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt . . . . And Ephraim had become like a foolish dove; they called to Egypt, and they went to Assyria" (Hosea, 12:2). It is self evident that this moral degeneracy and political anarchy led to religious perversities also. The inhabitants of Samaria may still have used the phrase: "As Yahveh liveth," but they sacrificed just the same not only to the constellation of the heavens, but also to the idols of

Baal, and offerings and incense were brought upon hills and high places, under oaks and tamarisks. Samaritan women, like those of Nineveh and Babylon, gave up their chastity in honor of the goddess of love, and with the price of their dishonor they erected images and altars to the gods!

In the midst of this degeneracy and anarchy, the prophetic voice was not silent. A number of prophets arose to hold up before the people a mirror of their vices and the inevitable consequences to which they would lead. Though they no longer enjoyed the freedom of speech which prevailed under Jeroboam II, these men of God were not daunted. The rulers began to persecute them; but even the threats of death would not silence them. On the contrary, persecution spurred them on to greater zeal and impetuosity. The orations of one of these prophets who lived in the last days of the kingdom of Israel have been preserved under the name of Hosea, and they give us a faithful portrayal of the demoralization of the times. Mercilessly and recklessly, Hosea II uncovers the wickedness, the perversions and the corruption of the people. Though he is not devoid of poetic expressions and imagery, his impetuosity does not allow of deliberation, of weighing of words and of poetic symmetry. He is carried from one subject to another, now with sadness, now with scorn; threats give way to imprecations, and imprecations to the most tender sympathy. He characterizes the relation between the nobles and the prophets in these words: "The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. Ephraim lieth in wait for the people of God, laying snares in all their paths, and persecutions even in the house of their God" (Hosea 9: 7-8). Hosea II realizes the futility of his appeals to the people and the rulers. It was with great sorrow that he saw

that only misery and banishment would finally awaken the people to the follies of their ways, but he could not be silent, and he tells the naked truth to all classes of the people, sparing the priests even less. The thoughtless system of sacrifice which tolerated wickedness he denounces with scorn: "I desire mercy, above sacrifices, and the knowledge of God above burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6). Ironically he reminds the people of their demand of Samuel to give them a king, as though the king would cure all their ailments: "Where, then, is thy king whom thou hast demanded, saying: 'Give me a king and princes'? I have given the king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hosea 13:10-11).

The doom hanging over the kingdom of Samaria fell at last. Hoshea, son of Elah, the murderer of Pekah, finally ascended the throne of Samaria (727-719). This last king of Israel was better than, or rather not so bad as his predecessors, and he was also warlike; but even he could not prevent the inevitable ruin. It seems that he was holding secret communication with Egypt that always held out false hopes. Just at that time Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, fell upon Elulai, king of Tyre, and forced him to submission, and then turned to Samaria. Hoshea hastened to meet him and promised him tribute. But no sooner did the Great King withdraw than all the neighboring nations made common cause, and determined to rebel against him. Elulai of Tyre, Hoshea of Israel, and the Philistines formed a confederacy, and listened to the seductive voice of Sebech (So), the second of the Ethiopian kings of Egypt and rival of Assyria, who promised aid. Upon the death of Ahaz the confederates sent an embassy to Jerusalem and asked Hezekiah to join the confederacy. Hoshea began the rebellion by refusing to pay his annual



OBELISK OF SHALMANESSER II.

In the Upper Row: Jehu Kneeling before the King of Assyria

tribute to Assyria. Shalmaneser immediately gathered his armies, crossed the Euphrates and the Lebanon, and fell upon Phoenicia. The hope of the nations for freedom disappeared. The Phoenician cities, Sidon, Acco, and even the capital Tyre, surrendered probably without resistance. From Acco Shalmaneser approached the kingdom of Samaria through the Plain of Jezreel. The cities of Israel also surrendered, or the inhabitants fled to the capital. Hoshea, however, determined to resist. Samaria was strongly fortified and could endure a long siege; meanwhile, the promised help might come from Egypt, or some unforeseen circumstance might compel Shalmaneser to withdraw. Accordingly, Hoshea made the necessary preparations to withstand a long siege, strengthened the walls and the towers of Samaria, and supplied himself with an abundance of provisions and water. But the Assyrians, in the course of their many campaigns, had become expert in the art of laying siege to fortified cities. They threw up ramparts, erected movable towers, and drove battering rams against the walls. Both the defense and the attack must have been carried on with great exasperations, for the siege of Samaria continued for nearly three years (from the summer of 721 to that of 719). But all the exertions, the courage and the endurance of the besieged were of no avail. Samaria was taken, probably by storm. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, was led a captive, and spent the rest of his days in an Assyrian prison, probably at Nineveh. How many thousands fell in the last struggle for the kingdom of Israel, and how many were taken captive none can tell.

Only one anonymous prophet sought to strengthen the courage of Israel by announcing that, after they shall have been healed from their perversities, the captives shall return, and be joined unto Judah.

He sees Rachel, the mother of the tribes of Joseph and Ephraim, lamenting bitterly before God over the misfortune that has befallen her children, and he hears the reassuring voice of God: "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope for thy children, and they shall return from the land of the enemy." (Jer. 31:15).* For the time being, however, the oft repeated threats of the prophets against Israel were fulfilled to the letter. The idols of Dan and Samaria and of other cities were taken to Nineveh, and the thousands of captives were scattered and settled in groups in thinly populated districts, the location of which is not definitely known, in Halah and Habor on the river Gozan, in the mountains of Media, and in Elam west of Persia. The house of Israel, that endured for two hundred and sixty years, under the rule of twenty kings, vanished in one day, leaving no trace behind it, because it forsook its original elevating and invigorating teachings, and followed the enervating vices connected with idolatry. What became of the ten tribes? Some believed they discovered them in the far east, some in the far west. There were deceivers and visionaries who claimed to be the descendants of the lost tribes. Undoubtedly the ten tribes were absorbed among the nations, and disappeared. Some of them, husbandmen, vintagers and shepherds, were allowed to remain in the land, and some of the nobles who lived on the border of Judah probably sought safety in that country.

The fall of Samaria stupefied but also sobered the "Remnant of Israel," the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon and Levi. For the time being, at least, the people and the rulers paid closer attention

* Verses 1-25 of the 31st chapter of the Book of Jeremiah belong not to Jeremiah but to an anonymous prophet who prophesied shortly after the fall of Samaria.

OBELISK OF SHALMANESSER II.

JEWS BRINGING TRIBUTE

to the admonitions of the prophets, and especially of Isaiah, who had foretold that "the crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden down under foot; and the glorious beauty which is on the head of the valley of olives shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before summer which is quickly eaten up" (Is. 28:4). This prophecy was fulfilled. Jerusalem herself was saved from sharing the fate of Samaria only by a caprice on the part of the Assyrian conqueror. The people of Judah were now in the mood of listening to the words of those men who pointed out the right path leading to the salvation of the nation.

CHAPTER VII

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL (719-608 B. C. E.)

To the good fortune of the "Remnant of Israel," King Hezekiah (724-696) who succeeded Ahaz on the throne, was just the opposite of his father. He was a man of a tender, poetic nature, and of lofty ideals which he found embodied in the ancient laws, statutes and traditions of Israel. The same zeal which his father had devoted to foreign cults Hezekiah displayed in restoring the original Judahn customs and in purifying the religious rites and institutions. He took the Torah as a guide for himself and his people. Hezekiah was a shining example to the people, and he possessed not only the qualities of justice, magnanimity, and generosity, but also the virtues of gentleness, modesty and humility, which, as a rule, are not associated with royalty. His was that sincere piety which is as rare as artistic or military genius. Whether the prophets had early discerned those noble qualities in the young prince, or whether they themselves had a hand in shaping and moulding the soul of the future king, the fact remains that two prophets had announced great expectations of Hezekiah while he was still very young. Hezekiah, who watched his father's perversions with sorrow, showed his

displeasure with them immediately upon his father's death. He did not permit his father's body to be interred in the royal sepulchre of the house of David, but had a separate tomb prepared for it; and tradition has it that his coffin was a board tied with ropes and not a magnificent sarcophagus, as was the royal custom. The prophetic disciples, the "Meek" and the "Sufferers," who had been humbled to the dust during the reign of Ahaz, hailed with joy the ascension of the new king of whom so much had been promisel. One of their number gave expression to their longings in a beautiful psalm (101).

Hezekiah's reign, rich in virtues, in poetic activity, and in tremendous political events, would have become a golden age were it not for the nobles of Judah who stood as a barrier between the king and the people. The kings of Judah had long ago ceased to wield sole authority; the princes of Judah had arrogated a great deal of power to themselves, and against their united opposition the king was powerless. They occupied the offices of judges, and held in their hands the police power (Shoter) necessary to enforce their decisions. The individual citizen knew only these judges, or princes, and stood in awe of them. The complaints of the oppressed hardly ever reached the ears of the king. Even in the capital the king had little power. The overseer of the palace, in the days of Hezekiah a man by name of Shebna, who controlled the army and all the courtiers, succeeded in making himself all-powerful, and the king was virtually a prisoner in his own palace. The notion that it was beneath the dignity of the king to pay attention to the details of government, deprived him of all control. He knew little or in distorted form of the occurrences outside of the palace, and his orders were either disobeyed or willfully reversed.

At the commencement of his reign, the courtiers, the office holders, and the judges allowed the young king free scope as is usually the case with young kings whose character and will power are still unknown. Hezekiah embraced this opportunity to institute reforms, destroy idolatry, to restore the temple worship, and to remove unworthy officials and fill their places with worthy men. He took special care to provide for the Levites, who were the singers and the poets, and the very backbone of the "Meek" and the "Sufferers," and who had been reduced to extreme poverty under Ahaz. Hezekiah ordered that the tithes upon which they depended for their maintenance should be set aside for them and turned over to them regularly. The purifying of the country from the filth and the vices of idolatry was no easy matter. The temple had been deserted, and the country was filled with idols and altars. He reopened the temple in Jerusalem, restored it to its former dignity, and destroyed all images and idols, including also the brazen serpent which had been regarded as the symbol of the god of health. But in order to do away with idolatry once for all, he prohibited the erection of and the sacrifice on private altars on the hills and high places even to Yahveh, and ordered all who wished to sacrifice and to worship to come to the temple of Jerusalem. This injunction appeared harsh to many people. Freedom of worship was an ancient institution; certain shrines enjoyed a reputation for holiness, and it would work a hardship on the inhabitants of the far south to have to come to Jerusalem to sacrifice. But Hezekiah felt that only such energetic measures could wean the people away from their thoughtless habits. When the spring festival approached, he ordered that the paschal lamb, which had hitherto been sacrificed on private altars, should be offered only in the sanctuary of

Jerusalem. At the same time he postponed the festival from the first to the second month, undoubtedly because the spring had not yet arrived, the season of the year not agreeing with the reckoning of the year according to lunar months. The fact that the short, lunar months failed to agree with the seasons of the year from time to time, led Hezekiah to introduce an intercalary month every two or three years in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar year. This scheme had been in use among the Babylonians with whom Ahaz stood in close contact. Hezekiah introduced the Babylonian calendar into Judah.

The courtiers, however, did not allow the king to enjoy his independence long. Hezekiah was of a poetic disposition, soft, pliable, and of little willpower. The political situation was a complicated one. Shalmaneser's campaign against .Phoenicia and Samaria occurred in the early years of Hezekiah's reign, and he had to choose between Israel and Assyria. To embrace the cause of his kinsmen was to incur the ill-will of the all-powerful conqueror. What was he to do? While he was thus hesitating, Shebna, the overseer of the palace, and his followers among the courtiers, reasserted their power, and decided the baffling question for him—and Hezekiah yielded. The advantage they thus gained they utilized for their own selfish purposes. As a result, Hezekiah's reign presents many contradictions. While the king himself was a model of virtue, of justice, and of pure religiousness, the powerful princes carried on their old vicious practices undisturbed, and even retained their idols, in spite of Hezekiah's efforts to banish idolatry from his country. This conflict, due to the weakness of the king and the willfulness of Shebna and the princes, led to baneful political consequences.

While the kingdom of Samaria was engaged in its final struggle with Assyria, Judah remained the vassal of that powerful empire. At this distance of time, one can hardly judge whether the indifference of Judah to the fate of Samaria was a blunder, a crime, or a stroke of diplomacy. Hezekiah, at any rate, was not responsible for it, since his voice had little effect upon his councillors when a question of war or of peace was to be decided. For some inexplicable reason, however, the statesmen of Judah soon determined to assume a hostile attitude toward Assyria, and began a secret correspondence with Egypt with a view of obtaining aid, or, at least, a great number of horses in the coming conflict with Assyria. But this secret scheme did not escape the prophetic eye of Isaiah. The prophet realized that the hope of Egyptian aid was vain, and that Judah was in danger of sharing the fate of Samaria if the lords, in their infatuation, persisted in breaking with Assyria; and he was about to raise his mighty voice in protest. The lords, however, silenced the prophet; they suppressed his freedom of speech for fear that his outspokenness would attract the attention of the king and of the people to the misdoings of the councillors and to the dangers to which they exposed the country. Isaiah employed another means. The Assyrians had undertaken a war against the Philistines who likewise sought to shake off their yoke. The interior of the country was already conquered, and Ashdod on the Mediterranean was besieged. The outcome of the conflict was awaited in Jerusalem with great anxiety. Isaiah laid aside his hairy, prophetic mantle, removed his shoes, and walked barefooted and without a cloak through the streets of Jerusalem. This was to be a sign that Ashdod would fall, and that the inhabitants of Egypt would be dragged into captivity naked and barefooted. When Ashdod fell

after a siege of three years, Isaiah broke his silence, and explained the meaning of his strange conduct.

But the fall of Ashdod and the captivity of the Philistines did not have the desired deterring effect upon the statesmen of Judah; they rather continued their policy of duplicity as heretofore, urged on undoubtedly by Tirhakah (Taharko), the third of the Ethiopio-Egyptian dynasty. Another secret embassy, carrying rich gifts, was sent to Egypt, and concluded a solemn treaty with the king, the conditions of which seemed to be that Egypt was to send an army of horsemen to the aid of Judah in case of war. This time Isaiah could no longer contain himself. He employed all the power of his eloquence, vivid descriptions of the threatened misfortune, mockery at the blindness of the statesmen, mild admonitions, and happy prospects for the future, to render futile, if still possible, the beginning of such folly on the part of the rulers of Judah. Isaiah advised that Judah remain neutral in the struggle between Assyria and Egypt. However, knowing that his advice would be disregarded, Isaiah emphasized two facts: that Judah would suffer severely at the hands of the Assyrians, but that the country, purified and ennobled by its sufferings, would not and could not be destroyed by human hands. These convictions Isaiah expressed with all positiveness even before the coming of the Assyrian army.

Meanwhile, regardless of Isaiah's exhortations and advice, events took their course. Hezekiah, or rather those who acted in his name, refused to pay tribute to Assyria, and the inevitable followed. King Sennacherib gathered a large army, and determined to make an attack not only upon Judah but also upon Egypt, which had become more accessible with the conquests of the intervening countries of Aram, Phoenicia, Samaria and Philistia.

The leaders of Judah, feeling unequal to venture an open battle, made all preparations for resistance by strengthening the fortifications, in the hope that they might detain the Assyrians until help arrived from Egypt. Jerusalem was fortified with special care. The upper lake fed by the brook of Gibeon was walled in, and the water was conducted into the city by means of a subterranean canal; while the water conduits built by Solomon in the southern part of the city, at the brook of Etam, were stopped up to prevent the besiegers from obtaining drinking water, and thus to render a long siege impossible. A large supply of weapons was placed in the arsenal of the "House of the Lebanon Forest."

The soul of all these activities was Shebna, the overseer of the palace. He and his clique of princes seemed not to entertain the least fear of the coming of the Assyrians. As a matter of fact, a spirit of insolent gayety reigned in Jerusalem; people ate and drank and enjoyed themselves. As though they were impatient for the arrival of the enemy, people flocked to the roofs to watch for their appearance. Shebna, who was a shrewd man, prepared himself for the worst also. Shebna, considering himself the equal of the king, had a stately, royal tomb hewn for himself in a rock. The prophet Isaiah in a vigorous oration protested against this presumption of the overseer, and against the overconfidence of the nobles, and denounced Shebna, whom he held responsible for the danger in which the country was plunged, in words of crushing irony: "What hast thou here; and whom hast thou here that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here? . . . The Lord will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die . . . . the shame of thy lord's house. And I will drive thee from thy station" (Is. 22: 16-20). This fierce attack had the effect that the king

reasserted himself, and removed Shebna from office.

But what had once been done could not be undone. Sennacherib, full of wrath at Hezekiah's rebellion, was already on his way to Judah. All the strong cities that lay on his road were taken by storm and destroyed; and their wailing inhabitants sought safety in the capital, for the Assyrians were merciless. The highways were deserted. As the Assyrians drew near to Jerusalem, even the bravest lost courage, and insolence gave way to despair. But in the midst of this distraction, Isaiah alone remained calm, and gave expression to words of hope and courage. In an inspiring oration, such as he alone was capable of delivering, he prophesied the destruction of the Assyrian army, and opened up a vista of a glorious future when the exiles shall return from all the lands of their dispersion, when Israel and Judah shall again form a reunited nation, when jealousy and enmity shall no longer animate them, and when miracles, like those at the Exodus, shall be performed again. "Shout and rejoice, O inhabitants of Zion: for the Holy One of Israel is great in thy midst." (Is. 12:6). The country was indeed in a desolate condition, its cities burned, and its capital in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. Sennacherib did not stop in front of Jerusalem, but led his armies against Egypt through the lowlands of Philistia. With the defeat of Egypt, Jerusalem would be completely isolated and be forced to surrender, and then the capital of Judah would share the fate of Samaria. But, despite this gloomy prospect, Isaiah held firm to the conviction that Judah shall not be destroyed. The country will indeed suffer at the hands of Sennacherib, but in this crucible of suffering the nation, or at least a portion of it, shall be purified: "The remnant shall return, even the rem-

nant of Judah, unto the mighty God. For though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant shall return. The destruction is decreed, but overflowing with justice" (Is. 10:21-22).

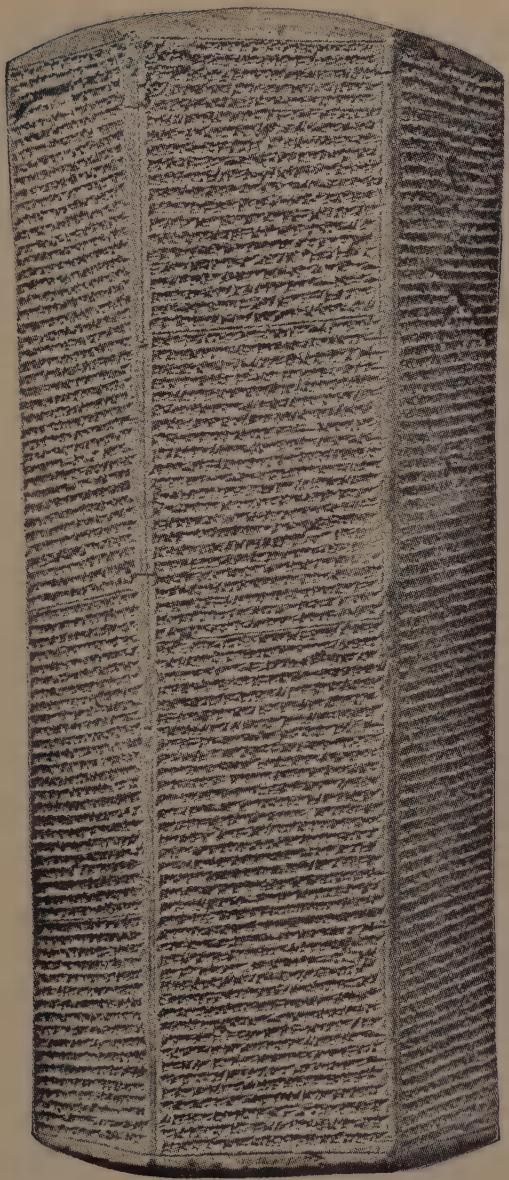
But glorious as Isaiah painted the future, the present reality was dark enough. In his despair Hezekiah sent ambassadors to Sennacherib to beg pardon for his rebellion and to offer his submission. The Assyrian king demanded first the considerable sum of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah made up this sum with a heavy heart, for he had to remove the golden coverings of the temple for that purpose. When this was sent to him, Sennacherib demanded also the unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. To emphasize this demand, he dispatched a division of his army to Jerusalem under the command of three high officials, among them Tartan, the victor of Ashdod, and Rabshakeh (chief butler), who could speak Hebrew. The Assyrian army encamped to the northeast of Jerusalem and made preparations for the siege; but before making an attack, the Assyrian officials demanded a parley with Hezekiah. Hezekiah sent three representatives, among them Eliakim, the new overseer of the palace. Within hearing of the soldiers of Judah who stood on the outer wall, Rabshakeh, in tones of insolence and scorn, and speaking in Hebrew, demanded the surrender of Jerusalem in the name of Sennacherib, pointing out how futile resistance was, how vain the reliance upon Egyptian aid, and that God himself had sent him to destroy Jerusalem. When Hezekiah's officers begged him to speak in Aramean rather than in Hebrew, Rabshakeh replied that he purposely employed a language that the soldiers understood that they might not be misled by Hezekiah's pretensions. He then addressed himself to the soldiers, and called to them in a loud voice not

to be deceived by Hezekiah, and to put no faith in their God, since the gods of the other nations were powerless to help them against Sennacherib; and he advised them to go over to the Assyrians, and forsake their king. The soldiers held their peace; but when news of Rabshakeh's insolence and blasphemy reached the city, the people were seized with terror. Hezekiah ordered a general fast and a procession to the temple, and he himself went to the sanctuary in mourner's garb. Isaiah embraced this opportunity to appeal to the nobles of Judah who persisted in their crimes in spite of the general distress, and to point out the futility of outward piety, consisting of sacrifices and fasts. Salvation and safety can be brought about only by a change of heart: "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves, remove your evil deeds from before Me: cease from evil and learn to do good" (Is. 1:16-17). When Hezekiah sent the highest officials and priests to consult the prophet as to what reply he should give Rabshakeh, Isaiah, seized by a prophetic vision, replied that the king need fear naught, that Sennacherib would receive such tidings that would compel him to raise the siege, and that he would return to his country in disgrace. Hezekiah, thereupon, sent word to Rabshakeh that he would not surrender, and would rely on the protection of his God.

Sennacherib had meanwhile learned that Tirhaka of Egypt was on his way to meet him with a large force. He, therefore, raised the siege of Jerusalem, gathered his scattered army, and concentrated his forces at Pelusium. When Rabshakeh informed him of Hezekiah's decision, the Great King sent a missive to Hezekiah by messengers, in which he repeated his former threats, and expressed his contempt of the insignificant country of Judah and of its God. Hezekiah's reply, dictated by Isaiah, was

to the effect that Sennacherib will not shoot one arrow against Jerusalem, but that he will return the way he had come, and that God will protect the city for His own sake.

While the raising of the siege was regarded as the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, and the people of Jerusalem were breathing freely once more, Hezekiah fell dangerously sick, and was on the point of death. The news of the king's serious illness spread consternation in Jerusalem. The people were affectionately attached to Hezekiah, and there was danger that his death at this juncture would result in civil war. With his face turned to the wall, Hezekiah offered a fervent prayer to God. Upon the application of a remedy suggested by Isaiah, the king recovered within three days—an event which he celebrated in a touching psalm of gratitude which was probably sung in the temple. Jerusalem was greatly rejoiced at the king's recovery, though the joy was somewhat subdued, owing to the anxiety of the outcome of the struggle between Egypt and Assyria. All of a sudden, the joyous news reached Jerusalem that Sennacherib and his army were returning home in a haste that looked like flight! (711). What had happened? Details were not known, because the scene of battle was so distant. In Jerusalem it was said that a devastating pestilence, a destroying angel, had swept away one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian soldiers in one night. In Egypt the priests were telling that an immense number of field mice overran the Assyrian camp at night, and gnawed through the quivers, bows and harness, and that the Assyrians, finding themselves deprived of weapons, took to flight. But no matter how the destruction of the great Assyrian army came about, it was then regarded as a miracle and as a divine punishment for Sennacherib's insolence



Clay Cylinder of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, inscribed with Account of the Besieging of Hezekiah, King of Judah, in Jerusalem

and blasphemy. In Jerusalem the joy was so much stronger, since Isaiah's prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter. The refugees from outlying districts who had sought safety in the capital, and those who were hidden in the caves and in the clefts of rocks were now able to return to their homes and to their occupations in security. Now that the fear of Assyria had vanished, Hezekiah was enabled to recapture the cities which the Philistines had taken from his father Ahaz. His kingdom extended its boundaries, and Judah again assumed a position of importance among the neighboring nations. Merodach-Baladan, the king of far-away Babylon, sent an embassy with rich gifts to Hezekiah presumably to congratulate him upon the restoration of his health, but, in reality, to form an alliance with him against their common enemy, Assyria. Hezekiah was naturally flattered; he received the Babylonian ambassadors with becoming honors, and showed them his treasures, consisting of stores of spices and balsams which were rare and much sought after. Isaiah was displeased at this display of vanity on the part of Hezekiah, and prophesied that his new ally would, in the course of time, bring evil upon his country. Hezekiah received the prophetic rebuke in humility.

The fifteen years that Hezekiah still reigned after the defeat of the Assyrians (710-696) were a golden age for the internal development of the "Remnant of Israel." The people could each sit under his vine and fig tree with none to disturb them. As in the days of David and Solomon, strangers come to Judah, and joined the people of Israel as proselytes. The poor and the oppressed were looked upon with favor by Hezekiah; the nobles and the princes were deprived of their power, and the king was free to surround himself with faithful and God-fearing men. The disciples of Isaiah became

the king's confidants, and were called "Hezekiah's men." Poetry and literature flourished. Levites composed triumphant songs in commemoration of Sennacherib's defeat, in language worthy of Isaiah himself. The psalms of that period, in contents and form, possess a genuine poetic value. "Hezekiah's men" collected the older proverbs to which they added some pithy sayings of their own, and gave them a finished literary form. They likewise developed, if they did not create, the elevated prose of historic presentation. The history of Israel from the wild period of the Judges, to the time of Hezekiah, as contained in the three books of Judges, Samuel and Kings, and drawn by the hand of a master, received its literary form in the time of Hezekiah, and was probably written by a Levite or a prophetic disciple. The author's main object in his historic presentation was to bring home to the consciousness of his people the lesson that the people of Israel were successful only so long as they remained faithful to God, and that idolatry was the cause of all their misfortunes.

Hezekiah's reign was peaceful and free from disturbance to the end of his days. Sennacherib's defeat was so thorough that he could undertake no further invasions; and when he was murdered by his own sons shortly after in a temple at Nineveh, the dissensions among his sons that followed precluded any intention of foreign conquests on their part. Hezekiah was the last king to be buried in the royal sepulchre of his fathers, and a magnificent funeral was provided for him by the people who loved him. He left, it seems, only one son, Manasseh, who was born some years after the conclusion of the war.

But Judah was not fated to enjoy her good fortune even for several consecutive generations, and the golden age of Hezekiah's last years gave way

to a period of heedlessness, weakness and restlessness. Politically the country remained undisturbed; but internal conditions were such as to produce disruption and to lead to the permanent enfeeblement of the state. As the king ascended the throne at the tender age of twelve, the reins of power fell into the hands of the unscrupulous nobles and princes who had been removed from office by Hezekiah, and they determined to restore the old order of things which Hezekiah had overthrown. The young king was completely under the influence and control of these princes, who were younger sons or cousins of King Ahaz. Acting in his name, they first granted the freedom to worship and to sacrifice at the private altars on the high places which Hezekiah had interdicted. After that, all the old abominable idol cults were introduced again. In Jerusalem, and in the temple itself, altars were erected to Baal and Astarte; on the roofs, smaller altars were placed in honor of the star worship. In the temple court a large statue, probably of the Assyrian goddess Mylitta, was put up. Naturally, the vices and immorality connected with the worship of Mylitta and Astarte were also revived. The stakes (Tophet) for the sacrifice of children in the beautiful Valley of Ben Hinnom were opened again. The priests of the house of Aaron who at first refused to countenance the newly introduced idol worship were removed, and idolatrous priests (Chamarim) officiated in their place even in the temple. In the course of time, owing to the loss of their means of livelihood, a number of priests, especially the descendants of Abiathar, who had hitherto occupied a subordinate position, reconciled themselves to the new order of things, and accepted priestly offices at idolatrous altars. False prophets sprang up, who, to gain the favor of the ruling class, not only palliated, but even defended and jus-

tified the foreign cults as the only true and saving religion. Unfortunately for Judah, Manasseh's reign extended over a period of more than fifty years (695-641) during which time those conditions prevailed. The people of Judah might have completely forgotten their past, and might have been reduced to an insignificant idolatrous nation to be forgotten of history—for what would Israel and Judah amount to without the consciousness of their mission to be a blessing to the human race? Fortunately there existed already, at least in Jerusalem, a strong party of men who held sacred the ancient traditions, whose purity of faith and of life presented a striking contrast to the viciousness of idolatry, and who were determined to seal their convictions with their blood. The "disciples of the Lord," the spiritual children of Isaiah; the psalmists, who sang songs of triumph under Hezekiah; the "meek sufferers" whom the same king had raised to honor; the priests of the house of Zadok who refused to defile themselves with idolatrous practices; and, above all, the prophets whom Isaiah's golden eloquence had inspired with a fervent devotion to the cause of Yahveh—all these formed a small but determined party, the party of the prophets or Anavim, or as they called themselves, the "Community of the Upright." This community held to the convictions that idolatry was vanity and folly; that God is not with the strong but with the weak, that He regards the cause of the widow and orphan, and that He loves the stranger also. Even if in former times a certain being and reality were attributed to the gods of the nation, though it was acknowledged that Yahveh was the supreme God, this circle had now become convinced of the absolute non-existence of the gods. This truth, though it took root only in a small community, was sure of victory in the end.

Manasseh's innovations brought many trials and tribulations to the "Congregation of the Upright." Those of their number who held office under Hezekiah were removed from their positions; the priests of the house of Zadok were banished from the temple and deprived of their livelihood; the Levites, who were always subordinate to the priests, were treated like slaves, and compelled to assist at idolatrous sacrifices. But a worse fate awaited them. The prophets of that day would not hold their peace, but raised their voices in loud protest against the defilement of the temple, and against the vices and the corruptions which accompanied the idolatrous cults. The rulers of Judah drowned the prophetic voices in blood; the prophets were murdered. The names of these martyrs for God and morality have not been preserved. Tradition has it that Manasseh had the aged prophet Isaiah sawn asunder. Isaiah must have passed away before the disgraceful reign of Manasseh, but his disciples fell victim to it. "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (II Kings, 21:16). Not only the victims of his displeasure fell by the sword, but their children also.

The prophetic orations delivered in these evil days have not been preserved, with the exception, perhaps, of those of Micah of Moresheth. (Micah II). The persecutions to which they were exposed did not give the prophets time in which to write down their prophecies. Even the historians, as though to doom those evil days to oblivion, had little to say of the public events which then occurred. One occurrence of vital concern to Manasseh's reign they passed over almost in silence. One of Sennacherib's sons, Esarhaddon, who made himself master of Assyria by patricide (about 680-668) and who also succeeded in subduing Babylon, un-

dertook a campaign against Egypt. A few of his generals, touching the sea coast of Judah, overawed Manasseh to such an extent that he agreed to submit to Assyria. Manasseh went in person to them to agree upon terms of peace, but, it is said, he was made a prisoner and carried in chains to Babylon. Sennacherib's son, at the same time, transplanted captives from Babylon, Cuth and other conquered cities to the territory of Samaria. These exiles, caled Cuthites, after the larger element of the population, and Samaritans from their place of residence, gradually adopted Israelitish customs, probably from the remnant of the Israelites who were left there after the fall of Samaria. The Cuthites made pilgrimages to the sanctuary of Bethel, where Israelitish priests still officiated. Later on it was said that these foreign settlers, attacked by lions that had gathered in Samaria during the years of its desolation, an incident which they ascribed to the anger of the local god, asked the Assyrian king to send them an Israelitish high priest. The king granted their desire, and sent them a high priest who made his residence in Bethel at the old temple of Jeroboam. The Cuthites, however, continued their idolatrous practices, some of them indulging even in human sacrifices, and became in consequence half-Israelite and half-heathen. Esarhaddon conquered Egypt, appointed his own governors over that kingdom, and carried many trophies to Assyria. Manasseh himself, it was said, was released and returned to his home, but idolatry, immorality and persecutions continued. When he died (641) he was buried not in the royal tombs at the City of David, but in the Garden of Uzza, probably under the shelter of an image which had been erected there.

Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon (640-639) who was twenty-two years of age. Amon

continued in the perversities of his father, though but little is known to judge him by since his reign was brief. Why the nobles disliked him is not stated; but they formed a conspiracy against him and killed him in his palace (621). That the people loved him is proven by the fact that they rose against the conspirators and killed them, and placed his eight-year-old son Josiah on the throne (638-608). At first, no change of policy was instituted by the new king. During his minority, the princes of Judah lorded it with a high hand in his name; and were not content with merely maintaining the existing idolatrous cults, but borrowed new ones. In order to gain the favor of Psammetichus of Egypt, who again restored the power of his country, the statesmen of Judah introduced the Egyptian animal worship in Jerusalem. At the gates of the city altars were erected in honor of Apis. The violence and idolatry which prevailed throughout the minority of Josiah, produced a number of prophets, who labored zealously in behalf of justice and of the law. Among them was a prophetess, Huldah, whose words were sought after, as was the case with Deborah. The oldest of this generation of prophets was Zephaniah, who belonged to a prominent family of Jerusalem. Fearlessly he denounced the perversions of his times, especially those of the princes and the royal sons who sought to gain prestige by aping everything that was foreign. Like Amos and Joel he announced the coming of "an awful day of the Lord," and prophesied the doom of Philistia, Ammon and Moab that looked down with pride upon Judah, and he foretold especially the ignominious fall of Nineveh.

The gradual fall of Assyria actually commenced at that time. Nation after nation tore itself loose from Assyria under her last king but one, or was

conquered by the Medes. The second king of Media, Phraortes, conquered many peoples, and finally also the Persians; and, with his united forces, undertook a campaign against Nineveh. The Assyrians, however, were still strong and warlike enough to defeat the Median army (635) and Phraortes lost his life in the battle. His son, Cyaxares, even bolder and more enterprising than his father, determined to avenge his father's death, and fell upon the Assyrians with such violence that he routed them completely, and approached Nineveh (634). But while he was engaged in the siege of the Assyrian capital he received the information that the Scythians, a numberless horde of savages from the steppes of the Don, the Volga and the Caucasus, had descended upon Media, and were plundering, burning and killing without mercy. Cyaxares was compelled to raise the siege of Nineveh in order to protect his own dominions, and it was only by means of tribute that he was able to get rid of the savages. The roaming Scythians, bent upon pillage and the accumulation of treasure, overran Assyria, Phoenicia, Philistia, where they burned the temple of the Assyrian goddess Mylitta; and were turning their covetous eyes also upon Egypt, when Psammetichus bought them off with rich treasures. From Philistia, the Scythian hordes swarmed over Judah also, devastated the country, carried away the flocks, and burned many cities and villages. Jerusalem itself was spared. The young king Josiah probably bought immunity for his capital by means of a heavy bribe.

The terror spread by the Scythians, and the horrible reports of burned cities and atrocious murders committed by them, made a powerful impression upon the people of Judah and especially upon the young king, and brought home to them the folly of idol worship. Were the gods of Assyria, Baby-

lon, Phoenicia, and Philistia able to save their respective worshippers from the savage Scythians? But Josiah was of a mild and impressionable nature, and did not possess the strength of character necessary to banish the foreign cults which had taken deep root in the country in the course of more than fifty years, and thus to arouse the ill-will of the powerful nobles against him. Josiah, however, undertook to rescue the temple of Yahveh from the neglect with which it had been treated hitherto. He called a number of priests of the house of Aaron and Levites to the service of the temple, appointed as high priest Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, of the house of Zadok, and authorized them to raise the funds necessary to repair the breaches of the temple walls. As no free will offerings were brought, as in the days of Joash, owing either to the indifference of the rich towards the temple, or to the impoverishment of the population as a result of the Scythian depredations, the Levitical gate keepers had to go from city to city and from house to house to beg for contributions. Still, in spite of his interest in the temple, Josiah could not muster up enough courage to make a determined attack upon idolatry, until a prophetic youth and a book finally inspired him to take that important step. The youth was the prophet Jeremiah, and the book was Deuteronomy.

Jeremiah, son of the priest Hilkiah (born between 645-640: died between 580-570), belonged to the priestly city of Anathoth, three miles northeast of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. From his earliest youth he betrayed a lofty soul, a tender, melancholy nature, hating sham and pretense. The priests of Anathoth could not possibly have exerted an ennobling influence upon him, since they persecuted him with relentless hatred from the moment he made his public appearance. He must have been

stirred, however, by the writings of older prophets, and his soul absorbed them so completely that their words, thoughts and tendencies became his very own. This prophetic legacy shaped his spirit, and filled him with lofty conceptions of God and of morality, of Israel's great past, and of its significance for the future. Absorbed in such lofty meditations, he was suddenly seized by the prophetic spirit. He heard a voice telling him that even before his birth he had been selected as a prophet to the nations. Diffidently he exclaimed: "Alas, O Lord Yahveh, I cannot speak, for I am a mere youth!" when the voice replied: "Say not I am young, for wherever I shall send thee, thou shalt go, and whatever I command thee to speak thou shalt speak . . . Behold, I have appointed thee this day over the nations and over the kingdom, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant." He saw significant visions which were explained to him as indicating that "out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land"; and was admonished, in conclusion, to be strong and fearless in delivering his message to the king, princes, priests and people. "Behold, I have made thee this day . . . an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land . . . and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail" (Jeremiah I, 5-19).

Such was Jeremiah's consecration to the office of prophet. He does not, indeed, possess the artistic eloquence of Isaiah; but the lack of beauty and poetic rapture in his orations is compensated by his clearness and definiteness. The times demanded a different sort of eloquence. Former prophets addressed themselves only to an educated, limited circle that could appreciate artistic, rhetorical and delicate turns of phrase. Jeremiah had to address himself to the entire people whom he was to save

from moral depravity, and he therefore employed plain, homely prose with a figure only at rare intervals. Jeremiah's prophecies were distinguished also by another peculiarity. Most of the former prophets spoke but in vague terms of a distant future, prophesied "an awful day of the Lord" which was to bring about a complete revolution, followed by an ideal era for Israel. This indefiniteness and vagueness of the older prophets, with the exception of Isaiah, weakened the force of their prophecies among the skeptical. Jeremiah, on the other hand, possessed a wonderfully clear power of prophetic vision. The punishment he foretold for Judah and Jerusalem was to take place in the near future and in his own lifetime. He announced it from year to year, and, later when the tragic fate was drawing near, from month to month in advance, and his visions were fulfilled with astonishing confirmation. He foresaw the future not in equivocal dream-visions, but in broad daylight. He, therefore, spoke not in riddles and imagery, but called things by their proper names. For almost half a century from the time he was stirred by his first vision (626), his was the difficult mission to point out the right road to those who had gone astray. His diffidence vanished. The prophetic spirit which was upon him he described "as a consuming fire and as a hammer that breaketh rocks." His first address against the people's infidelity to their own origin, against idolatry and moral perverseness possesses a sweeping power; and, delivered by a youth, must have been of telling effect. Several noble families forsook their evil doings and turned to the God of Jeremiah. The family of Shaphan, that occupied a high position, joined the prophetic party, and defended it energetically.

King Josiah was meanwhile earnestly engaged in restoring the dilapidated walls of the temple. He

sent three of his officials, among them Shaphan, his secretary (in 621), to the high priest Hilkiah, to order him to proceed with the necessary repairs out of the funds collected for that purpose. When the high priest turned the funds over to Shaphan, he gave him likewise a scroll with the words: "This book of the Law I found in the temple." Shaphan read it and was so impressed with its contents that he informed the king of the find. This remarkable book had an extraordinary effect. Its name was the "Second Torah," or the "Second Law Book"—Deuteronomy.

Unlike the usual codes which are cold, harsh, severe, threatening, pointing to "thou shalt," or "thou shalt not" and to severe penalties, the Deuteronomic code breathes a spirit of kindliness and mercifulness. It admonishes in a fatherly way, warns and pleads to do this and to avoid that: it does not threaten, but rather points to the evil consequent upon its violation: "Behold I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil . . . . blessings and curses: choose life" (Deut. 30:15-19). In the representation of ancient history no chronological order is followed, but such events are selected as would confirm the truth of important doctrines by means of historic evidence. To the recollection of such important events, Deuteronomy attaches admonitions or exhortations; the history of the past is to be the teacher of coming generations. The Deuteronomic code wishes to inculcate four particular ideas: the sublimity of God; the greatness of Israel's mission; the low state of the living generation beneath his mission; and finally the realization of the consequences of this unsettled contradiction. The God of Israel is the supreme being, and special importance is attached to His unity: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." This God led Israel in the past with

an especial, fatherly solicitude, for the purpose of rendering Israel a holy people. The people did not prove itself worthy of the mercy and favor of its God; it was stiff-necked and rebellious. Finally, historic events are cited to prove that Israel's falling away from God was always followed by punishment. God is, indeed, a "faithful God who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations," but He also "repayeth them that hate Him to their face to destroy them" (Deut. 7:9-10).

The Book of Deuteronomy appears like a new revelation; it claims to be a new covenant concluded just before the death of Moses. The Decalog was so simple and so intelligible that even a people of slaves could understand it. The higher conception of God, however, as he revealed himself through the history of Israel, was incomprehensible to a people who were slaves but yesterday. This was reserved for the second and third generation who were ripe for it. Moses impressed upon them the new ideal of the *love of God*. Among all the nations of the earth religious worship was the result of fear, of the dread of unknown powers that were to be propitiated by altars and sacrifices. The Deuteronomic code seeks to substitute love as the motive of religion: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5), and this ideal is emphasized again and again. All that God requires is "to love the Lord thy God, to hearken unto his voice and to cleave unto Him, for He is thy life and the strength of thy days (Ib. 30:20). Man is not to tremble before God, as a slave before his master, but is to approach Him in the spirit of filial love. This conception of religion brought man infinitely nearer to God.

Deuteronomy attaches the same importance to the form of worship of the true God as it does to the destruction of the foreign cults. Comparatively little significance is given to the institution of sacrifices. Though it recognizes the sacrificial cult as pleasing to God, it yet seeks to limit it to a central sanctuary, to a certain place which God had chosen. Meat for individual use could be eaten anywhere without the customary formality of sacrifice, thus abolishing the need of private altars and high places. Even in the chief sanctuary itself the sacrificial cult was restricted to the tithes and firstlings of animals and to votive offerings. "If thou refrainest from vowing a sacrifice, it shall not be accounted to thee for sin . . . The vow of thy lips shalt thou keep" (Deut. 23:23-4). Moreover, of those sacrifices, only certain portions were to be given to the priests, the rest was to be enjoyed by the offerer as a sacrificial meal in which the Levites, the stranger, the orphan, the widow, and the slaves were to participate as in a family affair. Stress is also laid upon prayer and thanksgiving in connection with the bringing of sacrifices. The agriculturist, when offering the first fruits of his field in the temple, was to make a sort of a confession before the altar and to thank God for freeing his people from Egyptian bondage and for the land which He had given his people. Every third year, the year when the tithes were to be brought, the farmer was to make confession before the altar that he had conscientiously contributed of his means both to the Levites and to the needy, and was to pray not only for his own but for the common welfare. The three pilgrimages to the temple on the occasion of the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths, were declared to be "feasts of joy." The poor were to participate in the festive

meals, for "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt" (Deut. 24:22).

The Deuteronomic code lays also great weight upon judicial affairs. Judges shall be appointed in every city who shall be incorruptible and who shall exercise judgment without fear or favor. The death penalty shall be executed only upon the unanimous testimony of two or three witnesses after thorough and impartial investigation, and shall be inflicted for murder, idolatry, kidnapping, and selling a person into slavery, upon an adulteress, and upon a rebellious son who is a glutton and a drunkard, and refuses to obey his parents in spite of their admonitions. Six places of refuge were to be provided for involuntary murderers. False witnesses were to receive the same penalty which their testimony would have inflicted upon their victim. The body of a condemned criminal who was hanged upon a tree must be buried the same day, and must not be exposed over night. Stripes shall be dealt to one who raises an evil report against the virtue of a daughter of Israel; but the judges are cautioned not to inflict more than forty stripes for any offense, "lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee" (Deut. 25:3).

This code seeks also to set limitations to the kingship of Israel. The king must be chosen by God, that is, acknowledged by a prophet, and must be an Israelite. He must not possess too many horses, too many wives, and too much gold and silver. He shall not arrogate pride to himself, and shall follow the Law as his guide. The code prescribes also regulations for warfare. The native Canaanites are to be given no quarter "in order that they might not teach Israel to do according to all their abominations." Outside of Palestine, the inhabi-

tants of a city that is besieged should be asked to surrender peacefully, in which case they become tributary and are to be spared. If they refuse the conditions of peace, and the city is conquered, the warriors alone are to be put to death; the women and children should be spared. In laying siege to a city, fruit trees are to be spared. A newly married man is exempt from military service for one year. Before a battle, the heralds were to announce to the army that anyone who had built a new house, or planted a new vineyard, or had recently married, may leave the army and return home. The timid and the cowardly are at liberty to leave before the battle in order not to inspire the warriors with their own fear. The camps must be kept clean, and free from filth.

The Deuteronomic code pays special attention to the treament of the poor and the helpless. Not only the tithes should be given to them, but also a portion of the harvest. A Hebrew slave obtaining his freedom in the seventh year, should not be sent away empty handed, but should receive from his former master some gifts of his flocks, his grain, and his vintage. A slave who ran away from a neighboring country to seek protection in Israel, should not be returned to his master. The code abounds in laws inculcating kindliness, sympathy and humaneness, to which Moses calls attention with special emphasis as the basis of Israel's fame, "your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations" (Deut. 4:6). Moreover, this law was not in heaven, nor on the other side of the sea. It is easy to fulfill it. "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Ib. 30:14). The Law is to be read at the end of each Sabbatical year in the presence of all the people and the strangers, that every one may become acquainted

with its contents. Every king of Israel, upon ascending the throne, shall have a copy of the law made for him, which should be near him and which he should consult frequently. One portion of the code is devoted to a description of the fearful punishments which would follow upon the violation and neglect of these laws (Deut. 28:15-58).

This newly-found code, the promulgation of which was to form a turning point in the history not only of Israel but of all civilized nations, made a deep impression upon King Josiah. Shocked at the punishments it threatened, and struck by the cosnciousness that he had permitted the violation of its ordinances, the king tore his garments in his grief. At the advice of the high priest Hilkiah, Josiah sent several officials, including the high priest, to consult the prophetess Huldah as to his future and to the course he was to pursue. Jeremiah was overlooked probably on account of his youth and because he had not as yet gained a recognized position; but, for some unknown reason, even Zephaniah was not consulted. Huldah, the wife of Shallum, the overseer of the royal garments, sent word to the king that the evils threatened in the book of laws will not come to pass in his day, because he had humbled himself before God. At the same time she urged the king to take measures to destroy the abomination of idolatry with the vice and injustice consequent upon it.

Reassured as to the fate of his people during his reign, Josiah devoted himself to the Deuteronomic reformation with extraordinary zeal. First of all, he summoned to the temple the elders of the people from all over the country, and the entire population of Jerusalem from the highest to the lowest, and had the contents of the newly discovered code read to them while the king himself stood on an elevated platform erected for him in the temple,

The assembled multitude took a solemn oath to observe the new covenant with all their heart and soul; and a curse was pronounced upon those who would violate it, to which the people shouted "Amen." Upon the king's order, all the images, statutes and altars dedicated to idolatry were removed, demolished, and burned in the valley of Kidron, and the ashes scattered over the graves of the common people. The sanctuaries of Moloch, in the Valley of Hinnom, where children used to be burned, Josiah ordered defiled; and all altars on the high places were removed. The foreign priests who had officiated at the shrines of their respective cults were banished from the country; while the Levitical priests who had assisted at idolatrous worship were removed from their offices, kept in Jerusalem under observation, and were not allowed to sacrifice though they were given a share in the priestly allowances. Of the Israelitish priests of Bethel, however, Josiah made a horrible example. Because Bethel had been the original source of the idolatrous perversities since the days of Jeroboam, Josiah ordered its priests killed upon the altars, and the altars themselves desecrated by means of dead human bones. This was the end of the calf worship at Bethel. In the spring of the same year (621), Josiah summoned all the people to the celebration of the feast of Passover. The people responded gladly and gave themselves up to the joy of the festival, amidst the singing of psalms and the musical accompaniment of the Levites. "Such a Passover had never before been witnessed in Israel since the days of Samuel" (Chron. II, 35:18). Josiah also insisted upon the liberation of Hebrew slaves who had served six years in accordance with Deuteronomy. He may have sent some Levites to the cities and the villages to act as teachers for the people. He is said to have intro-

duced one important innovation. The Ark of the Covenant which had hitherto been frequently taken to the battle field as a means of protection, and was carried on the shoulders of the Levites, was henceforth to remain in the Holy of Holies as the centre of the temple. So important did Josiah's energetic measures against idolatry appear to the faithful portion of the people that the prophetic party began to reckon a new era from the year in which Josiah purified the temple.

The political changes which Jeremiah foretold at the beginning of his public career began in the last years of Josiah's reign. The Assyrian world empire was tottering to its fall. Cyaxares of Media and Nabopolassar of Babylonia had made themselves independent; and Necho, son of Psammetichus of Egypt, also wished to take advantage of Assyria's increasing weakness. At the same time several other ambitious princes formed designs against Assyria. Necho, who was even more warlike and enterprising than his father, upon whose instance a Phœnician fleet first circumnavigated Africa, determined to wrest the region of the Lebanon to the Euphrates from Assyria, and to annex Syria and possibly even Assyria to Egypt. Necho did not consider his undertaking as difficult, since his rival Cyaxares was just then engaged in war with Alyattes of Lydia. This ambitious plan to conquer Assyria was frustrated by the triple alliance formed by Cyaxares, Nabopolassar and Alyattes, and cemented by the marriage of the daughter of Alyattes to the son of Cyaxares, and of the latter's daughter to Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar. This alliance was formed against Assyria that was then ruled by Sardanapal, a king given to pleasure and to vice. Necho, however, did not give up his attempt upon Syria. The three most powerful kings of the time started simultane-

ously (608), Cyaxares and Nabopolassar against Nineveh, and Necho against the countries of the Euphrates. Necho had to pass through the former territory of Israel, and Josiah, relying on the help of God whose law he had restored with so much zeal, determined to oppose him. A battle ensued at Megiddo, in the Plain of Jezreel, between the forces of Necho and of Josiah. The army of Judah was defeated, and Josiah was mortally wounded (608). The greatly beloved king was hurried to Jerusalem in a dying condition, and he soon expired. He was interred in the Garden of 'Uzza amidst the loud lamentations of his people; and the dirge which Jeremiah composed in memory of this, the last excellent king of the house of David, was repeated every year on the anniversary of the battle of Megiddo. No king was more sincerely mourned for than Josiah. The unfortunate battle of Megiddo proved a turning point in the history of Judah.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH
(608-586 B. C. E.)

Josiah's attempt to interfere with the plans of Egypt resulted in the subjection of Judah to Egypt. The defeat at Megiddo must have been thorough, for no attempt was made to rise against Necho even after he left for the north. All that was done on the death of the beloved king was to elect his successor speedily. Josiah left three sons by two wives. The oldest son was Eliakim; Shallum and Mattaniah were the younger. Josiah seems to have preferred Shallum as his successor, and, to carry out the wishes of their beloved king, the people called him to the throne, though he was two years younger than Eliakim. Shallum was anointed with holy oil in order to render his throne more secure; and, in accordance with the custom of the kings to assume a new name upon their ascension, Shallum took the name of Jehoahaz. As Judah was a vassal of Egypt, the new king needed the confirmation of Necho. Accordingly, Jehoahaz went to Riblah where Necho took up his temporary residence after his conquest of Syria. For some reason, however, Necho was displeased with Jehoahaz. He removed him from the throne, sent him in chains to Egypt, and appointed Eliakim

king of Judah. Jehoahaz retained his dignity for three months only. Eliakim, or Jehoiakim, as he called himself after his ascension (607-596), was ordered to pay a heavy fine to Necho for Josiah's interference with him. As there was no treasure either in the palace or in the temple, Jehoiakim had to resort to the disagreeable task of levying a forced contribution upon the wealthy men of the country according to their means.

To the humiliation, despair, weakness and submissiveness of Judah, a new evil was added. The religious and moral reformation which Josiah had brought about led the people to anticipate a period of happiness and success in accordance with the promises of Deuteronomy. But what happened was just the reverse. The king who was so zealous for Yahveh met his death on the battle field; his favorite son was in chains like a criminal, and his country was in shameful subjection. As a result, a reaction set in. The people began to doubt the power of the God of Israel, who did not or could not keep his promises. The foreign gods seemed to be more reliable. The solemn covenant made under Josiah was entirely forgotten, and the old order of things was completely restored. The altars on the high places were re-erected, and again there were as many gods as there were cities in Judah. The worship of the Egyptian goddess Neith, Queen of Heaven, who was most zealously honored at Sais, Necho's capital, and under whose protection Necho had won so many victories, became very popular in Judah. Statues of gold and silver, of wood and stone were put up in the houses, and the temple itself was again defiled by images of idols. Worst of all, the sacrifice of children by fire, in honor of Moloch, was again revived in the Valley of Hinnom, and the first born were the special victims. Hand in hand with the restoration

of idolatry went its concomitants: vice, adultery, the oppression of the stranger, the orphan, the widow, the bribing of judges, dishonesty, deceit, exorbitant usury, harsh mistreatment of insolvent debtors, and murder. Of Josiah's reformation not a trace was left a few years after his death. There was still a small group to whom the Law was sacred, but the great mass of the people was passionately devoted to the new cults and sank into moral degeneracy. Some of the Levitical priests, and particularly those of Anathoth, relatives and associates of the prophet Jeremiah, gave the new cults their sanction by officiating at their shrines. False prophets sprang up who embraced the cause of this madness and licentiousness not merely, as heretofore, out of selfish motives, but even with a certain conviction and passion. Jehoiakim himself, while he was not the cause of this reaction, tolerated it, participated in it, and made no effort to suppress it.

The prophets of Yahveh who stood for the pristine teaching, with its piety and morality, though exposed to persecutions and mistreatments in this period of degeneracy, fearlessly opposed the moral and religious deterioration. At no time were there so many prophets as during the two decades preceding the fall of Judah. Almost daily, and on every occasion, they addressed themselves to the people, the princes, and the king; urged, admonished, threatened and prophesied ruin unless they turned from the evil of their ways. Only four prophets are known by name: Jeremiah, Uriah, Habakuk, and Ezekiel, though the prophecies of some anonymous prophets have been preserved. Of the prophet Uriah, son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, only his tragic death is known. At the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign (between 607-604) Uriah prophesied the fall of Jerusalem and

Judah unless the king and people returned to Yahveh. When Jehoiakim heard of it, he sent officers to arrest him. The prophet fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim had him delivered to Jerusalem, and there the prophet was beheaded.

Jeremiah, who remained silent during the last years of Josiah, began his activity again upon the ascension of Jehoiakim and at the beginning of the relapse into the former depravity. He now realized the full significance of the words told him at his consecration that he was to be a "pillar of iron and a wall of brass." It demanded extraordinary courage, in the midst of the persecutions to which the prophets were subjected, to present a determined opposition to the prevailing degeneracy, and to announce the doom of the nation though the prophet's heart was bleeding within him. Though Jeremiah had meanwhile reached man's estate, he did not marry. Realizing the impending doom, the joy of life deserted him; he sought not companionship, but led a solitary existence in sorrow and gloom. Often he wished he were in some desert, far away from his people, where he might not be compelled to behold the prevailing wickedness. But he must remain true to his mission, to warn, to admonish, in order that the nation may not meet its fate unwarned. He often poured forth his soul in the temple in silent prayer that God might withhold the threatened doom from his people, and as often his prophetic soul realized that his prayers were in vain.

One of his first orations in the reign of Jehoiakim provoked against him the hatred of the idolatrous priests and the false prophets. On the occasion of a festival, when a large multitude assembled in the temple with their offerings, Jeremiah denounced their perversities in caustic words, and condemned with special vehemence the newly

introduced cult of Neith, and the burning of children. Jeremiah had hardly finished his address when he was seized by the priests and the false prophets who cried: "Thou shalt die, for thou hast prophesied that this temple will become like that of Shiloh" (Jer. 26:8-9). A great uproar arose which attracted the attention of several princes who hurried from the palace to the temple. Among them was Ahikam, son of Shaphan, and others who belonged to the prophetic party. These princes instituted a court of inquiry at one of the temple gates, and through the efforts of his friends and especially of Ahikam, Jeremiah was let go this time, because the princes found that he spoke in the name of God. The priests and the false prophets persecuted Jeremiah henceforth with all the greater fury, and watched for every opportunity to do him harm.

Meanwhile the doom of Assyria was fulfilled. This first great world empire that prescribed laws for the nations for upwards of six centuries, and that extended its sway from the foot of the Caucasus and the shore of the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, and from eastern Media to Asia Minor and Egypt; that treated its subject nations with the utmost cruelty, and whose kings considered themselves gods; this great world empire fell ignominiously through the united efforts of Cyaxares of Media and Nabopolassar of Babylonia. Nineveh, the capital, fell after a siege (605). The doom of Assyria had been foretold by two prophets of Judah, Nahum and Zephaniah. The prophets who followed the course of historic events saw in the fall of Assyria the confirmation of their convictions that the existence of a moral order reveals itself in history. Assyria fell because it was given to vanity and to vice: and the most powerful empire will go down to ruin under similar moral con-

ditions. Important political changes followed upon the fall of Assyria. Media became the principal heir to the former Assyrian possessions; Cyaxares took the lion's share, and left to his confederate Nabopolassar only Babylonia, Elam, and, at best, the claim upon the countries west of the Euphrates, among which was Judah.

Upon the death of Nabopolassar, Necho thought that he would be able to gain an easy victory over the new king of Babylonia. But the young prince, Nebuchadnezzar, who succeeded his father (609-561), was a heroic warrior, and a battle ensued at Carchemish (Circesium), a city on the mouth of Chaborah, a tributary of the Euphrates. Jerusalem awaited with anxiety the outcome of the struggle between Babylonia and Egypt. In a masterly oration Jeremiah foretold the defeat of the Egyptian army. As a matter of fact, Necho was defeated, and Jeremiah's prophecy was confirmed. The defeat at Carchemish freed Judah temporarily from the overlordship of Egypt, and relieved the secret anxiety of the people and the king over the impending fall of the nation which Jeremiah had frequently announced. Assyria was no more; Egypt was weakened by reverses. Jehoiakim and the princes, freed from their worries over the future, could now, therefore, indulge in their vices and follies undisturbed. Jehoiakim erected for himself an extensive palace, containing many balconies and windows, which he had painted, and ceiled with cedarwood. Jehoiakim forced the free citizens to labor in his building enterprise, on pain of death; and, undisturbed by momentary dangers, he gave himself up to debauchery and riotous living. Jeremiah, however, rudely awakened the king and the princes out of their indolence. His prophetic eye saw clearly that Chaldea, hitherto known by name only, was destined to take the place of Assyria as

a world empire. Not long after Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Necho, Jeremiah foretold the coming ascendency of the Babylonian king over the nations, and the crushing power he is to wield over Judah. Jeremiah insisted that Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument chosen by God to carry out the judgment against the nations; and he insistently referred to the tremendous changes to be brought about by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans. The prophet Habakuk who resembled his contemporary Jeremiah in his tender and sympathetic nature, likewise proclaimed that the Chaldeans were to execute the judgment against Judah and Jerusalem. But the prophecies and threats of the prophets fell upon deaf ears. The frequent repetitions of these prophecies of evil weakened their effort. Some scorned the prophets because their prophecies did not come to immediate fulfillment. Others denied the truthfulness of the utterances of the prophets; and even those who were inclined to believe comforted themselves with the hope that the announcements of evil referred to some distant future. The false prophets did their utmost to counteract the effects and the admonitions of the prophecies of Jeremiah and his fellow-prophets. They calmed the people by calling "peace, peace," and persecuted Jeremiah most bitterly. Even his own relatives turned against him. His faithful disciple Baruch, son of Neriah, shared the persecutions of his master.

The prophecies of Jeremiah were finally to be confirmed; the calamity at the hands of the Chaldeans which he foretold was drawing nigh. After Nebuchadnezzar had established internal order within his extended empire, had begun gigantic public works, and, by means of canals, had provided for inland navigation, he undertook a campaign of conquest. Syria surrendered without re-

sistance. Ithobal II, king of Phoenicia, also subjected himself to Nebuchadnezzar. His main objective point was Egypt. But, to facilitate the accomplishment of this difficult task, the subjection of the countries intervening between Syria and Egypt was essential. Insignificant as Judah, Philistia and Edom were, their hostile attitude might hinder and their subjection might further the interests of Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldean army steadily advanced. Nebuchadnezzar gave Jehoiakim the choice between subjection and annihilation. Egypt, on the other hand, encouraged him to resist, promising help, and holding out other false allurements. Judah was again to become the battle field of two great contending powers as in the days of Hezekiah. A decision had to be made.

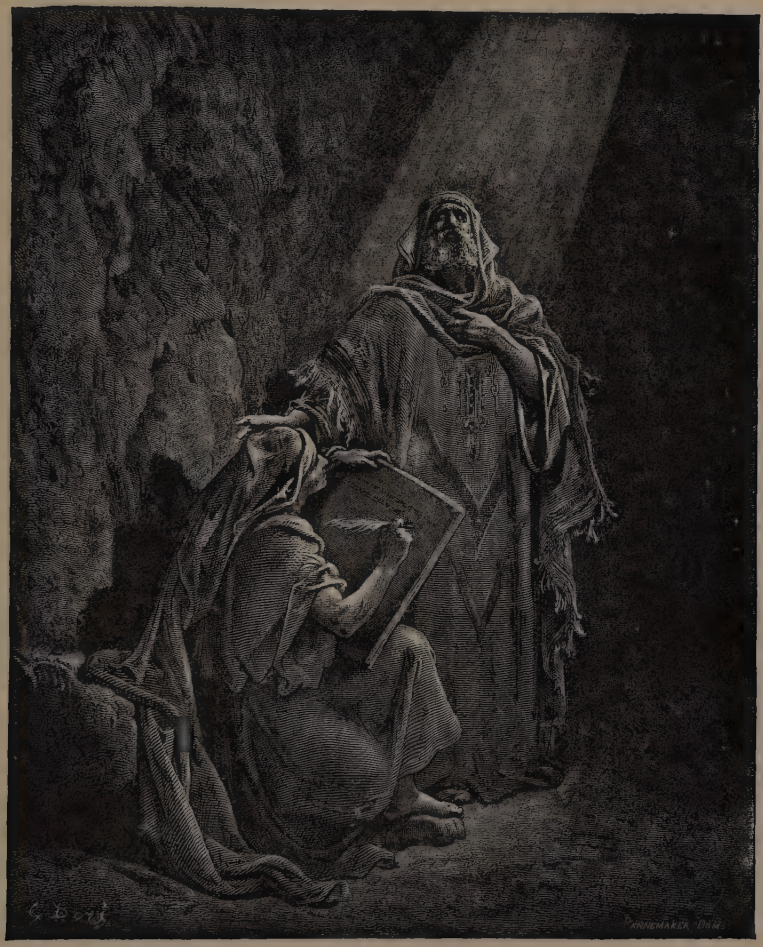
In anticipation of Egyptian aid or in the hope of a miracle, Jehoiakim and his advisers postponed their decision from day to day. A fast day was proclaimed in the ninth month (winter, 600 B. C. E.), and all the people were summoned to Jerusalem, there to pray to God in the hope that he might avert the threatened evil. In spite of their idolatrous perversities, the people put their reliance upon the temple of Yahveh and believed that that sanctuary would protect them against the most powerful enemy. The people were in a state of great excitement, and flocked to the temple as though it were a safe place of refuge. Jeremiah, in the midst of this excitement, ordered his faithful disciple Baruch to write down the prophecy which he had delivered many years ago, in which he foretold the rise and the overwhelming power of the Chaldeans, and to read its contents to the assembled multitude. For some reason, Jeremiah was unable to address the people, and he, therefore, asked Baruch to represent him. Baruch hesitated. How dare he read a prophecy, the object

of which was to induce the people to submit to the Chaldeans, while the nation was assembled in fast and prayer in the hope of averting such a calamity! Jeremiah, however, urged him on to do his duty in the name of God, and Baruch yielded. In the court of the temple, and in the presence of all the people, he read the scroll of Jeremiah, and its contents made a profound impression. There were many in the audience who may have heard his prophetic warning before, and who had either disregarded or forgotten it. But now, on the eve of its fulfillment, with the Chaldeans almost at the gate of Jerusalem, the fact that Jeremiah had foretold many years ago the doom of the nation, unless the people repented of their sins, had a staggering effect upon the assembled multitude. Micaiah, son of Gemariah, a young man who had heard the reading and was overwhelmed by its contents, hurried to the palace where the princes were assembled, and told them of the occurrence. The princes invited Baruch to read the scroll in their presence, and they also were profoundly moved by it. In the hope that the reading of the scroll would have a similar effect upon the king, and would induce him to submit to Nebuchadnezzar without resistance, and possibly also to institute some reforms as his father had done upon hearing the Deuteronomic code, the princes went to the king and told him of what had happened. Jehoiakim ordered the scroll read to him, and the princes felt hopeful. Because it was cool, the king sat near a brazier filled with live coal which was placed in the centre of the room, and the princes stood about him. While one of the princes was reading the scroll, Jehoiakim took each page as its reading was finished, and calmly threw it on the live coals. The princes were shocked, and begged him not to tempt fate. The king, however,

paid no attention, and kept on casting each page into the fire until the entire scroll was consumed. Jehoiakim even ordered the apprehension of Jeremiah and his disciple, and to make short shrift of them as he had done with Uriah. Happily, the anxious princes took care to hide Jeremiah and Baruch in a secret place where none could find them, and their lives were saved.

The reading of the scroll, however, had one effect: it created a split among the princes. Those among them who were convinced by Jeremiah's prophecies, and who took measures to protect the prophet, urged strenuously to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. The minister of war also belonged to that party, and Jehoiakim finally yielded to the pressure. He made peace with Nebuchadnezzar, paid the tribute imposed upon him, and obligated himself to all the duties of vassalage (600 B. C. E.). Jeremiah could now leave his hiding place; Jehoiakim dared not lay hands upon him. The prophet was protected not only by his friends among the princes but possibly also by Nebuchadnezzar himself who was not unaware that Jeremiah had prophesied a glorious career for him, and had advised the people of Judah to submit to Chaldea.

Jehoiakim, however, was restive under the Chaldean yoke, because he could no longer indulge in his passions as freely as heretofore. Moreover, the Egyptian king kept up a seductive agitation to induce him to rebel. When, therefore, Ithobal II of Phoenicia declared his independence (598), and fortified Tyre to enable it to withstand a long siege, Jehoiakim embraced the opportunity to rebel likewise, refused to pay his tribute, and formed an alliance with Egypt, and possibly also with Phoenicia. Nebuchadnezzar was not able to chastise Jehoiakim just then, because he had to concentrate all his forces upon Phoenicia, and had begun the



BARUCH WRITING JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY

By Doré

siege of Tyre which continued for thirteen years; though he sent small raiding parties into Judah. In the midst of these unsettled conditions, Jehoiakim died (597), and was interred in the royal tombs which Manasseh had constructed—the last king of the house of David to be buried in his native soil. His eighteen-year-old son Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah or Coniah) succeeded him, though the reins of power were held by his mother Nehushta. Jehoiachin persisted in the folly of resisting Nebuchadnezzar, and continued in the immoral and idolatrous abominations of his father. However, the power of Jehoiachin and his mother was of short duration. Nebuchadnezzar was now in a position to detach a large force from the siege of Tyre, in order to oppose the Egyptians who had begun hostilities. This Chaldean army easily subjected the entire territory as far as the River of Egypt (Rhinocorura), and captured all of Judah with the exception of a few cities in the south. Jehoiachin, however, continued his resistance, relying upon the strength of Jerusalem, and upon Egyptian aid. Angered at this unexpected resistance, Nebuchadnezzar sent several generals to lay siege to Jerusalem.

Jeremiah, who possibly remained silent during the last years of Jehoiakim's reign, again appeared on the scene, and spoke harshly and threateningly against the king and his mother with a freedom that can be accounted for only by the support which he must have received from several princes and a portion of the population. The king, however, had hardly time in which to think of repentance, for the distress of the besieged city was growing apace, augmented by the failure of rainfall. When Nebuchadnezzar himself reached the camp, the king, the queen mother, and their retinue betook themselves to him to plead for mercy; the

only mercy the victor showed was in sparing their lives. Jehoiachin was dethroned after a reign of one hundred days, and he with his entire family was sent into exile to Babylon. Ten thousand inhabitants of Jerusalem were transplanted to Babylonia: seven thousand soldiers; a mixed population of two thousand, including priests, Levites, and Benjaminites who had settled mostly in the capital; and one thousand artisans who were skilled in the making of armor and in building fortifications. In accordance with the right of war then prevailing, Nebuchadnezzar plundered the treasures of the temple and of the palace; but he left the state intact, and spared Jerusalem, its walls and the temple. The first foreign conqueror of Jerusalem, after an existence of nearly five centuries, dealt with the city more kindly than many a conqueror of later days.

Nebuchadnezzar placed upon the throne of Judah the youngest son of Josiah, Mattaniah, or, as he called himself, Zedekiah, who was twenty-one years old. The young king was of a mild, unwarlike and pliable nature; and such a man, Nebuchadnezzar thought, would cause him little trouble. To make sure of his loyalty as a vassal, he concluded a solemn alliance with Zedekiah, and made him take an oath of fealty. Judah was especially important to him as a buffer against Egypt, the conquest of which engaged his attention more and more. One of the reasons that induced him to send the noble families into exile was to keep them, rash and defiant as they ever were, from influencing the king to war and rebellion. Judah was to remain a small, feeble state, deriving whatever strength it possessed from him alone. Of the noble families, he left in Jerusalem only those of whose loyalty he was convinced or thought he was. These nobles formed the nucleus of the Chaldean

party at the head of which stood the family of Shaphan, whose grandson Gedaliah remained a loyal adherent of Nebuchadnezzar. The prophet Jeremiah, though he could not be called a member of the Chaldean party, offered still greater surety for friendly relations with Babylonia, since he had repeatedly asserted that Babylonia was divinely appointed as the mistress of the nations. Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, desired not only the continuance but even the prosperity and the internal strengthening of the commonwealth of Judah; only Judah must not become ambitious to make herself independent. As the prophet figuratively expressed it, Nebuchadnezzar wished Judah to become "a spreading vine of low stature whose branches turned towards him, and the roots thereof were under him" (Ez. 17:6).

As an unpretentious state, Judah could indeed have maintained itself for a long time perhaps. The country easily recovered from the hard blows it received. In spite of the loss of the flower of the nation by exile, and the general grief which was caused by the Babylonian conquest, the nation quickly recuperated, and reached a state of prosperity again. Jerusalem remained to the very end a rich and beautiful city, the "mistress of the countries." The natural beauty of its location was enhanced by many stately and magnificent edifices of cedar, cypress and stone, with the temple on the height of Moriah as its crowning glory. The country had indeed become greatly reduced in size, extending only from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, and from Geba in the north to Beersheba in the south, but its soil contained inexhaustible sources of wealth. The Phœnicians, the great commercial nation of antiquity, imported annually from Judah large quantities of wheat, juice of dates, oil, balm, and another valuable product, pannag, the mean-

ing of which is still uncertain. The hills from the Mountain of Olives to Hebron were especially adapted for olives, and yielded also so much wine that large quantities of it were exported to foreign countries. What the country lacked in extent was supplied by its heights. The mountain sides were carefully cultivated and were covered with rich soil which yielded a plentiful crop of corn. Waste places were reclaimed by means of canals. These activities provided the people with renewed sources of wealth. Jerusalem was the commercial centre of the neighboring nations, almost rivalling Tyre. Certain arts flourished in Judah to the end. Skill in fortifications reached what was then regarded a high degree of perfection. Sculpture was introduced into Judah from Assyria, and statues in stone, silver and gold were wrought by Israelite artists. The houses of the rich were artistically painted and decorated, and the floors were inlaid with mosaics of variegated stones. Education was general in Judah, and especially in the capital. Reading and writing were common to all classes. Writing was ordinarily done on scrolls of prepared bast or skins of animals. Important documents were carved on wooden tablets or engraved in stone. A popular literature was already in existence. The higher education prevalent in Jerusalem found expression in serious and frivolous songs, in dirges and proverbs; and the prophets with their poetic eloquence, the psalmists with their hymns, and the wise men with their keen, pithy sayings, contributed to the intellectual life of the people, and surrounded it with a poetic and oratorical atmosphere.

Women took an active part in social life, and exerted an influence both for good and evil. Some women urged their husbands to deeds of violence in order to satisfy their demands for luxury. The

Deuteronomic code prescribed, therefore, that women also should be present at the reading of the Law, and participate in its study. Popular proverbs, which are the truest expressions of social life, frequently speak of the good fortune of the man who is blessed with a good wife, and of the misfortune of a man whose wife is bad. These proverbs all presuppose a state of monogamy which accounts for woman's social freedom. In Jerusalem there was no barrier to the social intercourse of the sexes. Young men and maidens joined in the dances at weddings and at the festival of the vintage, to the sound of music. Gay youths gathered in wine houses where they made merry over wine and song. Jerusalem was altogether a gay and merry city.

Among all civilized nations, as a result of certain social conditions, a gradual separation into classes takes place. This was also the case in Judah. The great mass of the people, living in villages, and engaged in agriculture and the breeding of cattle, remained ignorant and simple, while the educated class, living in the capital, and stirred by political and spiritual events, attained a certain degree of culture and refinement. Between these two classes there existed a certain antagonism. The ancient antipathy between Judah and Benjamin assumed a new form. The tribe of Judah was mostly rustic, while the Benjaminites, and most of the princes of Jerusalem belonged to that tribe, were dwellers of cities. The cultured residents of the capital, in their over-refinement, looked with contempt and pride upon the simple rustics. Hence the antagonism between the two classes. On the other hand, the nobles of Jerusalem, by their winning manners, fluency of speech, and power of persuasion, easily swayed the mass of the people, and gradually gained control not only over the

people but also over the court. The kings exerted but little power, since, in imitation of the Sardanapals, they retired to their palace, wasted their time in their harems, and surrounded themselves with black Ethiopian eunuchs who made access to the royal presence difficult. While the men of the people advanced in moral life to the state of monogamy, the kings still indulged in polygamy; and the greater the pomp and ceremony with which they surrounded themselves, and the more attention they paid to trivialities, the less were they able to exert their will in important matters of state. The royal princes also became effeminate, tended their person with great care to preserve their beauty, and paid more attention to show and ostentation than to the conduct of the government and to the strengthening of the country and the nation. It was, therefore, only a few of the noble families of Judah and Benjamin, residing at Jerusalem, who held the actual reins of power in their hands, and decided all vital questions of state.

In the days of Zedekiah the preponderance of these nobles was so much greater, since the king was so weak and pliable. He had good intentions, was not given to idolatry, regretted the prevailing immoralities and injustice, and listened to the prophets; but he did not possess the strength of character to oppose the nobles and to take matters into his own hands. In the first two or three years of his reign nothing was changed; the old order or disorder of things prevailed, with its idolatry, oppression and injustice. Zedekiah asserted himself only enough to stop the persecutions of the prophetic party; for, in his heart of hearts, he had faith in Jeremiah's prophecies, and Jeremiah kept on insisting upon a strict observance of the Chaldean treaty. Moreover, the terror inspired by the power of the Chaldeans was still too fresh in the minds of

the nobles to permit of any serious intentions of rebellion. Gradually, however, the nobles grew restive and began to form conspiracies against Nebuchadnezzar. Psammis of Egyt, ever treacherous and unreliable, whom the prophet likened to a "broken reed," was the first to stir up the agitation against Chaldea, and an Egyptian party was formed in Jerusalem. The members of this party did not, of course, dare show their inclination to Egypt openly; but they betrayed it by adopting the animal worship of the Egyptians. They had figures of these sacred animals inlaid in the mosaic walls of one of the chambers of the temple, and offered incense to them. In the second place, Ithobal of Tyre was endeavoring to form a confederacy of all the neighboring countries against Babylonia. The neighboring kings had already fallen in with this plan, and pressure was brought to bear upon Zedekiah, also, to join the alliance. Above all, the Babylonian exiles who carried on a lively correspondence with their native country, urged upon their brethren in Judah to make war upon Babylonia, in the delusion that the defeat of Nebuchadnezzar would mean their freedom and restoration to their native land.

In the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign (593 B. C. E.) ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon gathered in Jerusalem for the purpose of making a united effort to persuade Zedekiah to join the alliance against Babylonia. Jeremiah regarded it as his prophetic duty to warn the nation against any conspiracy against Babylonia, and to point out to the exiles the folly and the vanity of the hopes held out for them by the false prophets. To each of the foreign ambassadors who had come to Jerusalem, Jeremiah held out a cup of wine as a symbol that they would all taste the "poisoned cup" to be handed to them by Nebuchad-

nezzar. To the exiles in Babylonia he sent a letter in which he advised them to build themselves homes, plant gardens and vineyards, marry, and identify their own interests with those of the country of their exile. Shemaiah the Nehelamite, a demagog of the exile, wrote home to the priest Zephaniah, the overseer of the temple, complaining that Jeremiah was a traitor who deserved to be put in prison and given to the torture. The false prophets of Jerusalem told of dreams in which was revealed to them the great salvation which is to come to Judah if she would only dare throw off the Babylonian yoke. In the midst of this clamor, Jeremiah's voice was drowned more and more. Zedekiah's weak character could not long resist the urging of Egypt and of the neighboring countries from without, and the impetuosity of the self-seeking nobles of Judah from within, and he yielded. He refused to pay his tribute to Nebuchadnezzar (590). Thus was the lot cast which was to decide the fate of Judah for all time to come. The people believed that in some mysterious way Jerusalem was inviolable, that some miracle would save it. While preparations were making for war, Jeremiah's words received still less consideration. The result appeared to justify the predictions of the false prophets. Nebuchadnezzar did not send an army immediately to chastise Zedekiah for the violation of his oath. More than a year passed before he entered upon his campaign, and another year before he began his attack upon Jerusalem. In the interval, Jerusalem gave itself up to unbridled joy which was shared by the Babylonian exiles, though they could not show it openly. The intense longing of the exiles to return to their native land transformed distant prospects into hope, and hope into reality. This misplaced enthusiasm reacted upon the people of Judah with whom the exiles were

in frequent communication, with the result that no sober deliberation and action was possible in either place.

At this juncture there appeared among the exiles a genuine prophet who was to exert an ennobling and purifying influence. Ezekiel, son of Buzi, a priest (born about 620-about 570) was endowed with a forceful eloquence, a rich imagination, a sweet and winning voice, and was a man of courage and endurance, and permeated by a lofty ideal which the people of Judah was to realize. He was carried away to Babylonia with the exiles under Jehoiachin, and lived in Tel-Abib on the Chebar, the canal which joined the Euphrates with the Tigris. Many prominent families of the exile had settled in that city, enjoying great freedom, and leading their own communal life undisturbed. Ezekiel lived among them many years quietly, occupied with his own affairs, when he was seized by prophetic visions as though the heavens opened, and he beheld heavenly apparitions. At first, these sublime visions overwhelmed and dazed him; and when he did begin to refer to them, and told of the evil which they portended, in contrast with the reassuring promises of the false prophets, his fellow exiles regarded him as crazy, bound him with ropes, and commanded him to hold his peace. During his confinement of four hundred and thirty days, which was partly compulsory and partly voluntary, he attracted attention to himself by many strange symbolic acts which he interpreted to signify the siege of Jerusalem, the dispersion and the destruction of its inhabitants by famine, fire and sword, the desecration of the temple itself, and the saving of only a small remnant. The impressive words in which he described his symbolic acts finally won for him the confidence of his fellow exiles, and the recognition as a divinely appointed

prophet. The elders frequented his house to consult him on important questions, and his voice and his eloquence proved irresistible. Ezekiel patterned himself after Jeremiah; his orations on the whole resemble Jeremiah's in thought; but he surpassed his model in the vividness of his imagination and in poetic power. His orations are therefore more spirited, rich in turns, graceful, not rarely artful, and unusually interesting through the interspersion of riddles, allegories, and puns. Jeremiah is brief and to the point; his pictures are soft, his reflections elegiac, permeated by sympathy and tenderness as though speaking in tears. Ezekiel loved minuteness; his pictures are described in detail, are not affected by emotions, and he does not hesitate to employ harsh and offensive expressions in order to emphasize his thoughts.

With the appearance of Ezekiel among the exiles, a favorable turn began in the religious life of the community. Mercilessly, Ezekiel exposed the misdeeds and the sins of the entire people, scorned their idle hopes of the continuance of the national existence, and pointed the road to reformation. Like Jeremiah, he maintained that the salvation of Israel was to come not from the degenerate inhabitants of Judah, but from the Babylonian exiles who were to be possessed of "a new heart and a new spirit," and whose "heart of stone would be changed into a heart of flesh." The prophet of the exile was the first to bring out most clearly the idea of Israel's self-purification and spiritual regeneration. Already in his first oration he emphasized this thought to the elders who came to seek him; and he often repeated the basic idea that God had forsaken Judah and Jerusalem, and had chosen the exiles to form the nucleus of a new nation. While the Jerusalemites, and even the members of the prophetic party among them, re-

garded the "city of God and the temple of God" indestructible, Ezekiel announced that the presence of God was to be sought not in Jerusalem, but in Babylonia in the midst of the exiles. By word of mouth and by symbolic acts Ezekiel pointed out the approaching fate of Judah to the aristocrats among the exiles who still cherished the vain hope that the rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar would culminate in their own liberation. With each new oration the respect for Ezekiel increased among the exiles; and even those who had tormented him before consulted him as to the outcome of the struggle which they watched with the utmost anxiety. Some came to consult him even while wearing small images on their hearts; and the prophet announced that he would refuse to hold intercourse with those who openly flaunted their idolatry in his face. This threat seems to have been effective, for he was sought after even more frequently, though his replies to the queries put to him were not at all agreeable.

The hour of doom finally approached. After an inactivity which continued for some time, Nebuchadnezzar started upon his punitive expedition. Arrived at the region of the Lebanon or the Jordan, he cast lots to decide whether Ammon or Judah was to be attacked first; he threw arrows bearing the names of the two countries, consulted his household gods and the entrails of sacrificial animals. The lot fell upon Jerusalem. The neighboring nations who were the first to urge Judah to rebellion, submitted, it seems, immediately upon the approach of the enemy; and Edom, bordering on Judah, even assumed a hostile attitude towards its neighbor. Tyre, hard pressed herself, could send no assistance. Judah could look only to Egyptian aid; but Egypt also hesitated at first. It was, therefore, an easy task for Nebuchadnezzar

to capture most of the fortified cities. On the tenth day of the tenth month (at the end of 588 or at the beginning of 587), the Chaldean army began the siege of Jerusalem. The fortifications of the capital had meanwhile been strengthened, and the city had been supplied with provisions and water to withstand a long siege. But the population of Jerusalem was greatly swelled by the influx of the villagers who fled for protection to the capital with their families and their cattle upon the approach of the enemy. Probably at the instigation of Jeremiah, the king commanded the liberation of all Hebrew slaves, with the view, possibly, of impressing the males into military service. The people of Jerusalem must have defended themselves courageously, for the siege, with brief interruptions, continued for a year and a half. The commander of the army of Judah was a eunuch in the service of Zedekiah; the king himself was neither a soldier nor a leader of any kind.

After the siege had continued for a year, with combats of varying fortune, a change occurred. King Apries (Hophra) of Egypt finally decided to keep his promise, and sent a considerable army against Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans were compelled to raise the siege of Jerusalem, and advanced to meet the Egyptians (February or March, 586). The joy of Jerusalem knew no bounds. The people streamed out of the gates of the city to enjoy a taste of freedom once more after their long confinement, to see how their fields and vineyards fared, and probably also to lay in a fresh supply of provisions in case of the renewal of the siege. No sooner did the terror of the siege subside than the nobles and the rich resumed their wonted depravities. The slaves who had recently been manumitted were again forced into slavery in spite of the covenant and oath. Jeremiah pro-

tested most indignantly against this expression of selfishness and heartlessness, and in a denunciatory address in the presence of the king and the nobles he rebuked them for the violation of their oath, and announced that the Chaldeans would return and capture Jerusalem, and that fire, the sword, pestilence and famine would rage in the city. To the king who sent two courtiers and Zephaniah, the overseer of the temple, to ask the prophet to intercede with prayer that the Chaldeans should not return, Jeremiah replied that even if the entire Chaldean army were annihilated and only two wounded soldiers remained, even they would rise and set the city on fire.

The nobles of Judah who had long ago been unfriendly to Jeremiah turned with a deadly hate against him upon the delivery of his last denunciatory address. When he also desired to leave the city to visit his native Anathoth, he was seized by a guard on the charge of trying to desert to the Babylonians, and was taken before the nobles in spite of his protests to the contrary. Glad of the opportunity to wreak vengeance upon him, the nobles treated him like a traitor and a spy, struck him, and cast him into a cistern (Spring of 506) in the dungeon which was in charge of Jonathan, the royal secretary, a cruel heartless man. In the narrow and filthy cell Jeremiah remained for many days in solitary confinement. Even his relatives were not permitted to see him. The nobles dared not kill him after all. In this prison the prophet sobbed out the heartrending dirge, "I am the man" (the third chapter of Lamentations), in which he bewails his ill-fate caused not alone by his sufferings, but still more by the misconstruction of his motives.

But the unbridled joy of Jerusalem was of short duration. The Chaldeans routed the Egyptian

army, and Judah was left to fight her battles all alone. The neighboring nations, even its former confederates, had nothing but scorn for Judah, and could hardly wait in patience for the fall of Jerusalem. The Chaldeans returned and besieged the city still more closely. The courage of the besieged began to sink. Many stole out of the city and went over to the Babylonians or fled to Egypt. Zedekiah realized too late the folly of the rebellion against the mighty Babylonians without having an entire nation behind him that is inspired with a desire for freedom. Secretly, he had Jeremiah brought into an inner chamber of the palace, and asked him if he had a prophecy concerning the outcome of the war. "Surely," replied Jeremiah; "thou shalt fall into the hands of the King of Babylonia." Discouraged and humbled, Zedekiah was just enough not to punish the prophet for his boldness; he even acceded to Jeremiah's petition to remove him from Jonathan's prison, placed him under guard in his palace, in the court Mattarah, and supplied him daily with a loaf of bread from the royal bakery. Jeremiah remained here several months. He was allowed the privilege of intercourse with his friends, and his faithful disciple Baruch was again near him. Meanwhile, the siege of Jerusalem became increasingly more horrible from day to day. The sword without and famine within, for the food supply was beginning to give out, demanded their victims by the thousands, and the streets of Jerusalem were strewn with dead bodies that lay unburied in the heat of summer and added the horror of pestilence to the stricken city. Jerusalem became the theatre of horrifying scenes which the survivors could never forget. Children expired in the arms of their helpless mothers; the rich, in their despair, threw their treasures away in a vain attempt to obtain a piece of bread; and, horror of

horrors, tender, loving mothers cooked their own children in order to satisfy their hunger! In the midst of this distress, Jeremiah urged upon all who would listen that the only means of saving their lives was by surrendering to the Chaldeans. When the nobles heard of it they demanded of the king to put the prophet to death because he was discouraging the resistance of the defenders. Zedekiah replied with his usual indecision: "He is in your hands: I can do naught against you," and the nobles cast Jeremiah into a slimy pit in the court of Mattarah. Even then they did not dare kill him outright, but they expected that Jeremiah would not come out alive out of that slimy pit. Jeremiah would undoubtedly have perished there had it not been for an Ethiopian servant of the king, named Ebed-melech, who felt outraged at the indignities offered the prophet. He called the king's attention to the fact that Jeremiah would surely perish in his slimy dungeon, and the king consented to have him removed. So deep was the cistern, and so feeble have the people become, that it required thirty men to raise the one man out of the pit by means of ropes. Jeremiah was not given his freedom, but was kept under guard in the court of Mattarah, though the king protected him from any further attacks of the nobles. As a matter of fact, Zedekiah himself contemplated in his secret heart the advisability of surrendering. In a secret chamber of the palace he consulted Jeremiah regarding such a fateful step, expressing the fear that the Judahns in the Chaldean camp would curse him and put him to death for such an act. Jeremiah assured him that no harm would befall him in the Chaldean camp, and added that even the women of the palace will scorn him should he prolong the hopeless struggle. Zedekiah, however, lacked the courage to take any decisive step; to the

very end he was unable to overcome his innate timidity. Such was the last king of the Davidic dynasty.

Meanwhile, death in the triple guise of famine, pestilence and the sword, raged among the inhabitants of the capital. The number of fighting men kept on decreasing, until hardly any were left to defend the walls. Finally the hour of doom struck for the city which even the heathens regarded as invincible. On the ninth of Tammuz (June 586), the bread supply failed, and, as a result of the exhaustion of the defenders, the Chaldeans succeeded in making a wide breach in the wall. The Babylonians entered the city, and the commanders of the army struck their tents in the "middle gate" which connected the lower city (Milloh) with Zion. The infuriated soldiery scattered themselves throughout the city, dishonored women, killed youths and men who appeared to them able to offer resistance, and threw the rest of the population into chains as captives. They also penetrated the temple, and massacred the priests and the prophets who sought protection there. The neighboring nations, the Philistines, Edomites, and Moabites who joined Nebuchadnezzar, also entered with the Chaldeans, plundered the treasures, and desecrated the holy places.

Zedekiah had meantime succeeded in escaping with a few followers through a subterranean passage, with the object of crossing the Jordan. But Zedekiah and his men were faint with hunger, and they were soon overtaken by the Chaldean horsemen and taken captive. In the city itself the conquerors captured of the nobility only the high priest Seraiah, the overseer of the temple Zephaniah, the eunuch who had commanded the army, five or seven of the king's advisers, the royal doorkeepers, and sixty other men. All the captives as

well as the deserters were thrown in chains, and taken to Ramah, there to await the decision of Nebuchadnezzar as to their fate. Among the chained captives was Jeremiah who was found by the Chaldeans in the court of Mattarah and was taken for a servant of the palace. Gedalaiah, son of Ahikam, a noble of the family of Shaphan, who was an adherent of Nebuchadnezzar from the beginning of the siege, was appointed as overseer of the captives. Zedekiah, who was captured with his sons and a few nobles near Jericho, was taken to Nebuchadnezzar who was then encamped at Riblah. The Chaldean king avenged himself on Zedekiah for the violation of his oath in the most cruel manner. Zedekiah's sons and relatives were slain in his presence after which Zedekiah himself was blinded. Blinded and chained he was sent a captive to Babylon where he did not survive his sorrows long. The fate of Jerusalem itself was still hanging in the balance. Nebuchadnezzar was at first inclined to spare it. He did not desire to turn Judah into a desert because of its usefulness in case of a war with Egypt; and a country without the protection of a large city could not maintain itself. On the other hand, the continuance of this rebellious city might be a constant menace to Babylonia. This consideration prevailed, and Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan, the commander of his guard, to Jerusalem with orders to destroy the city. The Edomite nobles who had an inveterate hatred against Judah, presented themselves to Nebuzaradan and goaded him on to destroy without mercy. The order was issued; the walls of the city were razed to the ground, and all magnificent houses, palaces and the temple, were given to the torch (10th of Ab—Aug., 586). The few remaining treasures of the temple, the artistically wrought brazen pillars, the brazen sea, the

brazen vases, the sacrificial vessels of gold and silver and the musical instruments, were all broken to pieces and carried away to Babylon.

No imperial city of antiquity that sank into ruin from the height of its splendor was so glorified in its fall as was Jerusalem. Poet and psalmist sang of its fate in such touching strains that they do not fail to move the sympathetic heart to pity even to-day. Poetry transformed Jerusalem's crown of martyrdom into a crown of glory. Was it Jeremiah who first poured forth his soul in lamentation over the ruins of Jerusalem, or was it his disciple Baruch? Did two or three other poets then continue the elegy? All these lamentations have a form of their own; they are arranged in alphabetical order. The first lament (Lament. I) was undoubtedly composed after the capture but before the destruction of Jerusalem, and bewails mostly the desertion of Jerusalem by her former confederates and the joy with which they contemplated her fall. The second dirge (Lamentations, Ch. 2) mourns after the destruction of the city, its walls, and above all, over the loss of the temple. The third lament (Lamentations, Ch. 4) weeps over the havoc wrought by the famine and over the hopelessness of the survivors on account of the capture of the king. One of the Levites, a member of the poetic family of Asaph, himself a chained captive, poured forth the depth of his sorrow in a brief psalm (Psalms, 79).

About a thousand years passed since the tribes of Israel, full of courage and of hope, crossed the Jordan and took possession of Canaan; and half a millenium since the first two kings of the house of David raised the kingdom to an extensive empire. And now? The greater part of the ten tribes had disappeared more than a century ago in unknown lands. Of the remainder which constituted the

kingdom of Judah, the greater part perished by the sword, famine and pestilence, a smaller part was led into captivity, and a small fraction fled to Egypt or remained in the country, fearful of the fate which was awaiting it. How literally Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled: "A third part shall perish of pestilence and famine in thy (Jerusalem's) midst; a third shall fall by the sword round about thee, and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ez. 5:12). As a matter of fact, the small fraction that was left was surrounded by many bitter enemies who sought to exterminate it also, that not a single member of Israel might remain in his native land.

The small band of soldiers who attempted to escape with Zedekiah through the subterranean passage scattered to all sides upon the approach of the Chaldeans. A handful of their number under the leadership of a royal prince, Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, escaped across the Jordan, found refuge with Baalis, king of Ammon, and remained in Ammon and the neighboring Moab. Others preferred to seek the protection of Egypt, where many families had escaped before; but the Edomites whose territory they had to cross in order to reach Egypt, proved cruel, inveterate foes. The Edomites kept watch on their borders and either killed the fugitives or delivered them to the Chaldeans. In addition to the desire of satisfying their hatred, the Edomites had also a political object in thus mistreating the fugitives. They wished to win the favor of the Chaldeans in the hope that Nebuchadnezzar would turn over to them the territory formerly occupied by the people of Judah and Israel. Only very few fugitives found refuge in Phoenician cities. The distance between Judah and Phoenicia was great; and before they reached their destina-

tion, the fugitives were overtaken by the Chaldeans and captured.

Most of the officers and men who left Jeruslaem with Zedekiah, preferred to remain in their native land; and, under the leadership of Johanan of the family Kareah, led a miserable existence, hiding in the ruins of destroyed cities or in the caves or grottoes of the mountains. To provide food for themselves, they made occasional raids upon small detachments of Chaldeans. In the midst of their wretchedness they were animated by the idle hope that, after the tumult of the war was over, they would regain possession of the land and rebuild the country. Those of them who were caught by the Chaldeans were either hanged or reduced to the most humiliating servitude. A poet who experienced that wretched existence, composed that heart rending fifth lament (Lament. Chap. V) that, in its short verses, sounds like moans and sobs.

For a moment it seemed as though the misery of the wretched survivors had come to an end. Nebuchadnezzar did not wish to destroy Judah completely; he needed it as an open highway in his war with Egypt. He determined, therefore, to allow it to exist as a small commonwealth, and appointed Gedaliah of the house of Shaphan, a loyal adherent of Babylonia, as its head. Gedalaiah was to gather around him the remnant of the nation, and to encourage the cultivation of the fields and the gardens that the country be not turned into a desert. The captives and the deserters who were suspected of treachery to Chaldea were sent partly to Riblah and partly to Babylonia. The common people, the farmers and the vintners were allowed to remain, and land was assigned to them on condition that they cultivate the fields and vineyards. Gedaliah was to be their governor, with Mizpah

(about four and one-half miles northeast of Jerusalem) as his residence. Nebuchadnezzar's choice of Gedaliah was a happy one. He was a man of a mild and peace-loving nature, in a sense a disciple of Jeremiah who had been befriended and protected by his father Ahikam. Only a man of his tenderness and unselfish devotion could heal the still bleeding wounds of the nation. Gedaliah was perhaps too gentle, having too much faith in human goodness and gratitude. The harmless captives, the daughters of King Zedekiah, many women and children, the eunuchs of Zedekiah's court, the farmers and vintners, about a thousand all told, were placed in his care.

The prophet Jeremiah was treated by Nebuchadnezzar with great respect. Nebuzaradan who had charge of the captives at Ramah removed his chains and gave him the liberty to go to Babylon or wherever else he chose, but advised him to join Gedaliah at Mizpah. The choice was a difficult one. Jeremiah witnessed the heart-rending scenes at Ramah when the chained captives were being led away to Babylonia, and his heart went out to them in their despair. He comforted them with the hope that at least their children or grandchildren would return to their former home, and he longed to share their captivity with them and strengthen and encourage them on the road. The captives themselves demanded it, hoping, through his influence with Nebuchadnezzar, to lighten their misery. Moreover Jeremiah realized that little was to be expected from the handful of ignorant farmers who were left behind, and that the regeneration of the nation was to come from the exile. On the other hand, he was loathe to leave his native land. A prophetic revelation finally led him to join Gedaliah and to continue his activity as a teacher and a guide to his people. His faithful disciple Baruch accom-

panied him. The presence of Jeremiah did indeed inspire renewed confidence for the future. Gedaliah had made it known that all fugitives who would join him would not be molested but would be allowed to settle in the cities and cultivate their fields undisturbed. A large number of the scattered fugitives returned to Mizpah, took an oath of allegiance to the Chaldean king, and settled down to cultivate the land. The fields and vineyards again yielded an abundant harvest. A few cities rose again from their ruins. Gedaliah created a sanctuary in Mizpah which had been regarded a sacred place from time immemorial. Samuel had built an altar there, and the Cuthites, half-heathen and half-Israelite, had been making pilgrimages there. Mizpah thus became the center of the commonwealth. The presence of the Chaldean garrison in Mizpah was indeed a constant reminder of the dependence of the "remnant of Judah" upon the Chaldean over-lord. But, under the circumstances, after the great calamity that had befallen the nation, conditions were tolerable, and at any rate, more favorable than the lot of the captives. After all, they were living on their native soil.

Johanan, son of Kareah, and the other chiefs with him who had been leading a wild, adventurous life in the mountains and in the ruins, fighting with wild beasts and with the still more savage Chaldeans, also decided finally to join Gedaliah and to submit to the Chaldeans, upon the governor's oath that their past offenses would be forgiven and forgotten. These adventurous men reconciled themselves to conditions, laid aside their arms, and began to cultivate the fields and to rebuild the ruins of the cities which had served them formerly as hiding places. Their considerable number and their former bold, adventurous mode of life added

an element of strength and security to the feeble "remnant of Judah."

Unfortunately, a disturbing factor also came in the person of Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, the royal prince, who had found refuge with Baalis of Ammon, and who was to crush the last hope of the remnant of Judah. To all appearances, he had made peace with Gedaliah and the Chaldeans, but in his heart he harbored a bitter enmity against both. Was it jealousy of Gedaliah, patriotic hatred against Babylonia, or both, that led him to form a miserable conspiracy against Gedaliah? Baalis of Ammon who could not bear to see Judah prosper again under Chaldean protection, certainly urged him on to the crime which was to put an end to that prosperity. Johanan, son of Kareah, and the other chiefs had meanwhile received secret information about Ishmael's treacherous intentions, warned Gedaliah of his danger, and begged his permission to put Ishmael out of the way in order to remove the only obstacle to the ever growing welfare of the commonwealth. Gedaliah, however, paid no heed to their warning, and this over-confidence of his proved his undoing and that of the commonwealth. Four years after the destruction of Jerusalem and the gathering of the scattered remnants of the nation under the governorship of Gedaliah, Ishmael arrived in Mizpah with ten companions, on the occasion of a festival, under a friendly guise. Gedaliah invited them to a banquet, and while the guests were making merry, unconscious of danger, Ishmael and his companions fell suddenly upon them and killed Gedaliah, his men and the Chaldeans present. The other inhabitants of Mizpah were put under the guard of Ishmael's men that the news of the crime might not leak out. Learning that eighty men were to arrive on the next day from Shechem, Shiloh, and

Samaria, and were coming to the temple of Mizpah with offerings, Ishmael went to meet them, enticed them into the city, separated them from one another, and murdered seventy of them, one by one, the remaining ten being spared only upon their promise to deliver to Ishmael their buried treasures. After this outrage was committed, Ishmael and his ten companions captured the old men, women, and children of Mizpah, among them the daughters of Zedekiah and the aged prophet Jeremiah and his disciple Baruch, with the intention of taking them across the Jordan into Ammon where they expected to be safe from the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar for the murder of his viceroy and the Chaldean garrison.

But Johanan and the other chiefs soon heard of Ishmael's outrages and began a hot pursuit. Ishmael was overtaken near the lake of Gibeon and a fight ensued. Two of his men fell, but Ishmael himself with eight of his companions fled across the Jordan and returned to Ammon. His nefarious plot was accomplished. The little commonwealth was broken to pieces with the death of Gedaliah. The remnant that was left was undecided as to what course to pursue. They feared the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar, who, in his wrath at the murder of his viceroy and of his garrison, would not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty, and their first impulse was to flee to Egypt before the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar could overtake them. Johanan and his followers consequently directed their steps to the south. But Baruch, Jeremiah's disciple, thought that it would be more advantageous to remain in their native land than to risk the uncertainties of a foreign country, and won over some of the chiefs to his view. Others opposed it. The leaders finally agreed to leave the decision with Jeremiah who was to turn to God in

prayer for a revelation as to the course they were to pursue. Jeremiah's mind had become somewhat clouded by the misfortune which he had experienced, and he wrestled in prayer for ten days that the light of a prophetic vision might again be vouchsafed to him. But, in the meantime, the leaders changed their minds and all decided upon emigration. When Jeremiah finally assembled all the chiefs and the people to proclaim to them, in the name of God, that they should remain where they were, and need not fear Nebuchadnezzar for he would treat them mercifully, his advice fell upon deaf ears. When Jeremiah threatened that their emigration would bring down upon them the very sword from which they were trying to flee, and that none of them would live to see his native land again, they denied that he was speaking in the name of God. The leaders started upon their way to Egypt without any further consideration, and drew all the rest with them, including Baruch and Jeremiah. They arrived in the Egyptian border city Taphnai (Tahphanhes), on the arm of the Nile near Pelusium, and were received kindly by Pharaoh Hophra, who was thoughtful enough to show hospitality to them whose country was ruined by his machinations; and they settled in Migdol, Memphis and Sais (Pathros?) where many others of their compatriots had found refuge previously. Thus, after a lapse of a thousand years, the sons of Jacob returned to Egypt again; but how changed! At the time of the exodus they were robust shepherds, whose horizon was narrow indeed, but who were sound and vigorous, full of hope and courage. Their descendants, on the other hand, were broken in body and spirit, too far removed from their ancestral faith to find solace in their God, and not far enough to be able to amalgamate with other nations and lose their identity.

Like all emigrants, these also lived in constant delusions, and watched every political disturbance in the vain hope that it would afford them an opportunity to return to their home and to their former freedom.

The land of Judah had meanwhile become completely depopulated. Nebuchadnezzar, who was not indifferent to the events of Mizpah, sent Nebuzaradan to Judah again. The Babylonian general did not find even one man of prominence; only a few farmers and vintners had stayed behind. This last remnant of Judah, seven hundred and forty-five persons in all, Nebuzaradan carried into captivity to Babylonia (ab. 582), the third exile since Jehoiachin. What became of Ishmael and his fellow conspirators is unknown; Gedaliah's memory, on the other hand, remained sacred, and the anniversary of his death was observed annually in Babylonia as a day of mourning. Judah became a veritable desert, an abode for wild beasts, as the prophets had foretold. Only in the south, the Idumeans annexed a few strips of the former territory of Judah, with or without the permission of the Babylonian king, and extended their domain in the lowlands (the Shephelah) to the Mediterranean. The exiles cherished a burning hatred against the Idumeans who exhibited a malicious joy at the fall of Jerusalem, and plundered and delivered the fugitives into the hands of the Babylonians, and were now taking possession of their territory. Two prophets, Obadiah and an anonymous one, prophesied evil days for Edom as recompense for the outrages she committed upon the people of Judah.

The imminent conflict between Egypt and Chaldea inspired the fugitives who settled in Egypt with vain hopes of a speedy restoration to their own lands. But the aged Jeremiah destroyed their de-

JEREMIAH AMIDST THE RUINS OF JERUSALEM

lusion and rebuked them sharply, in addition, for their addiction to the cult of Neith, the Queen of Heaven. The exiles still called upon Yahveh and swore by his name; this, however, did not prevent them from adopting the Egyptian cults to which the women were especially devoted. For the last time before his death, he called a large assembly at Taphnai, warned those assembled against the evil which would befall them as a result of their corruption, threatened that but few of them would return alive to their native land, and announced also the fall of Hophra, in whom they placed their hope. Ezekiel, in Babylonia, also prophesied to the same effect. These prophesies were very soon fulfilled. In the war against Cyrene the Egyptian army was defeated; and the military caste, jealous of the Carians and the Ionians whom Hophra had preferred, rose against him under the leadership of Amasis, an Egyptian of the middle class. Hophra was conquered, dethroned, and later strangled (571-570). The new Pharaoh who took great pains to attach to himself the Egyptians and the Greeks, took no interest at all in the fugitives from Judah who had settled in Egypt. They were completely neglected, and had to give up their dream of a return to their homes with Egyptian aid.

With his advancing age, Jeremiah's heart grew sadder and heavier in him. He did not succeed in his mission "to bring forth the precious from the vile"; his prophetic career seemed a failure. The small remnant of Judah that settled in Egypt persisted in its follies and its hardness of heart. But Jeremiah's efforts have not been in vain. The seed which he had scattered struck root in a different soil and produced glorious fruit. His mission not only "to destroy, but also to build and to plant" was accomplished among the Babylonian exiles.

SECOND PERIOD

THE EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC AGE

CHAPTER I

THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

(586-538 B. C. E.)

The oft-repeated prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel that only a small remnant would be left of the people of Judah, became a sad reality. Of the four million souls that constituted the kingdom of David, and of the million souls that originally constituted the kingdom of Judah alone, and that must have increased in the course of four centuries, only a very small number remained. Millions perished by the sword, by famine and pestilence, or were carried away in distant countries and lost. Of the survivors, the greatest number, not more than one hundred thousand, were carried into captivity to Babylonia; small groups settled in Egypt; of the ten tribes, some settled in the Median Empire and possibly also in Phoenicia, and how many were sold as slaves further west by Ionian slave-dealers! The prophecies of evil were fulfilled. Only a remnant was left. Was the brighter side of the prophecy also to be fulfilled, that that remnant, broken in body and spirit, exposed to scorn and captivity, was not to perish in spite of its misfortunes? According to human cal-

culation, that handful of exiles could not possibly have survived in its strange and hostile environment. It did not perish, however, but rose out of the dust and raised itself to further days of glory; certainly not an insignificant miracle.

The survival of the Babylonian exiles was due, first of all, to the mild treatment they received at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldean king was not only a conqueror but also a builder, and he was ambitious to make his newly founded empire rich and great. He added a new district, east of the Euphrates, to the city of Babylon and surrounded the whole city with a wall which enclosed a space of at least forty miles. Such a gigantic city had to be well populated if it were not to look like a desert. He therefore assigned places of residence, within the capital, to the captives of Judah, as well as to those of other conquered countries and especially to those who had voluntarily surrendered during the war. These exiles were treated with especial mildness; whole families and entire communities from the cities of Judah and Benjamin, with their relatives and slaves, were allowed to remain together and preserve their former union. The nobles and the princes, called the "Sons of David," formed a close and exclusive group by themselves. The latter were allowed to retain their hereditary slaves, the descendants of the Canaanites whom Solomon had reduced to forced labor, and hence called "Solomon's slaves"; and the members of the high-priestly family were likewise allowed to retain the temple slaves, Nethinim, descendants of the ancient Gibeonites. Even the language of Chaldea was not altogether strange to the captives; it was akin to the Hebrew, and the nobles of Judah, even before the exile, had learned to understand it, if not to speak it. The exiles thus felt perfectly at home in the land of

their captivity. The aristocracy formed a close national league, as exiles generally do, in the hope that some favorable turn of fortune might restore them to their home and to their former power; but they retained their former habits of conduct and thought, mistreated their inferiors, and their arrogance and recklessness endangered rather than furthered the survival of the remnant. Happily, the future of Israel did not depend on this rebellious and incorrigible aristocracy. Among the exiles there were also nobler elements who were permeated by absolute faith in the mercy of God who would not permit Israel to perish, and they prepared the way for the perpetuation of Israel by means of a rich and glorious literature. The priests of the house of Zadok who were never contaminated by idolatry, carried the Pentateuch into exile with them, and out of its pages they learned their mission of leading and teaching a holy life. The Levites, psalmists, and singers brought with them a collection of psalms which they increased by inspiring and doleful strains of their own. Finally, the Meek and the Poor (Anavim), the disciples of the prophets and living witnesses of their ideals, took with them the prophetic writings, the historical books, and a collection of proverbs. Inspired by this literature, they were more and more confirmed in their convictions that the words of comfort and hope uttered by the prophets will be fulfilled in due time, even as their prophecies of doom had already been fulfilled. The nation has lost many treasures, but one treasure remained of which it could not be deprived. This small but high-minded community undertook to cherish that treasure.

Foremost among them was the prophet Ezekiel, who, upon the destruction of Jerusalem, sought to soften and to ennoble the early exiles by his lucid

and powerful eloquence. During the siege of Jerusalem, Ezekiel was silent. Why repeat the prophecies of the doom of the capital which he had foretold so many times before? Upon the fall of Jerusalem, however, the prophet broke his silence. He denounced the heartless lords who, enjoying a comfortable existence in exile, were oppressing their inferiors, the "slaves of Solomon" and the Gibeonites. He railed against the practices of idolatry in which many exiles still indulged. Again, Ezekiel was called upon to combat the views of those who, in their despair, had given up all hope of the resurrection of the nation. In common with other prophets, Ezekiel announced with absolute conviction the restoration of the exiles to their home, after a change of heart had taken place among them. But many exiles, crushed by despair, regarded the hope of restoration as an idle dream and exclaimed "Our bones are dried and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off" (Ez. 37:11). The worst of all evils is when a nation despairs of itself. Ezekiel regarded it as a very important task to arouse the nation from its lethargy of despair, and in a beautiful parable of the resurrection of a heap of dry bones he reaffirmed his conviction of the resurrection of the nation. Moreover, there was another group that despaired of the revival of the nation on different grounds. For ages and ages the people provoked the anger of God by idolatry and other misdeeds. What was done could not be undone; sin must lead to its inevitable consequence: the death of the sinner. This group said: "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" (Ez. 33:10).

Ezekiel combated this pessimistic view also by uprooting the old, deep seated conception that sin and punishment were inseparately connected, that

wickedness must inevitably bring death or evil upon its perpetrator. Though not original with him, Ezekiel brought home to his generation most forcibly the comforting doctrine of repentance. Repeatedly and in varying imagery, Ezekiel painted the future redemption in ideal colors. So confident was this prophet of the exile of the restoration of the old order of things in the old home that he prepared a plan for the construction of the future temple and a new order of worship for the priests. Ezekiel, of course, did not have the near future in mind. The mood, the conceptions, and the actions of the exiles with whom he came in daily contact were not of such a nature that the prophet could place high hopes in them. But Ezekiel and the other men of God prepared the way for the spiritual resurrection of Israel. Not long after the death of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, a change for the better set in imperceptibly. The unpleasant experiences of the exile, in spite of Nebuchadnezzar's friendly treatment, had a share in bringing about that change of heart. The prophetic literature, however, was its prime cause.

For a short while after the death of Nebuchadnezzar (561 B. C. E.), the condition of the Babylonian exiles was exceedingly favorable. Evil-merodach (Illorodamus), Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor, was altogether unlike his father, being neither a warrior nor a statesman. Young princes of the house of David seem to have lived in his court as eunuchs and courtiers. As eunuchs often rose to positions of great power in ancient courts, Evil-merodach seems to have fallen under the influence of a Judahn favorite who induced the king to deal kindly with King Jehoiachin who was still languishing in prison. In the very year of his ascension to the throne, Evil-merodach set Jehoiachin free after an imprisonment of thirty-seven

years, and treated him with extraordinary honor and consideration. Undoubtedly Evil-merodach showed some favoritism also to Jehoiachin's fellow exiles; their liberties were extended and those who had been imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar were given their freedom. It is possible that Evil-merodach intended to permit the exiles to return to their homes and to restore Jehoiachin to the throne of Judah. However, Evil-merodach was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, after a reign of two years (560). The dream of a speedy restoration was quickly shattered, and the exiles were soon to feel the severity of captivity in all its bitterness.

In spite of the disappointment of their hope, the better elements among the exiles still clung to the conviction expressed by many prophets that the descendants of Abraham were indestructible. Those who were able to read absorbed themselves in the prophetic literature, and Jeremiah's prophecies, probably brought from Egypt to Babylonia by Baruch, his disciple, became especially popular. The tender, elegiac tone of these prophecies well accorded with the mood of the exiles. What the living words, streaming from the lips of the prophet, were unable to accomplish was accomplished by the dead letter of the written page. The spirit of the prophet permeated his readers, filled them with new hope, and prepared the way for "the new heart and the new soul." To strengthen this moral regeneration, one of the prophetic disciples, probably Baruch, compiled a comprehensive collection of historic books, comprising the long series of narratives, beginning with the creation and the origin of the people of Israel, up to the immediate present, the time when Jehoiachin was restored to favor. This collection was arranged in a series of books, the Pentateuch, Joshua, the histories of the judges, of Samuel, Saul and David. To these the

editor added the history of the kings from Solomon to Jehoiachin whose vicissitudes he witnessed with his own eyes. The historic events in the history of the kings he interpreted from his own point of view, in order to impress upon his generation that the misfortunes that had befallen the two kingdoms since the death of Solomon were due to the fact that kings and people had forsaken the God of Israel and had yielded to idolatry and to other perversities. This compilation, henceforth known as the "Books of the Earlier Prophets," is unique. It is brief, yet rich in substance and instruction; it is simple yet artistic, and is especially vivid and impressive. It became the second popular book among the exiles who not only read it with interest but took its teachings to heart. Levites made copies of it and spread it among the people; and these writings began to change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh and to breathe a new spirit into the people. The work which Ezekiel began was continued by Jeremiah's disciples.

The absorption in this literature led many exiles to self-investigation and to sincere repentance, and they tried to efface the inglorious past, with its idolatry and ingratitude to God, with tears of deep contrition. The four untoward days of the recent past, the day when Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of Jerusalem (in the tenth month, Tebeth), the day when the city was captured (in the fourth month, Tammuz), the day when the city and the temple were destroyed (in the fifth month, Ab), and the day when Gedaliah was murdered (in the seventh month, Tishri), these four days began to be observed as days of mourning, at first by a few of the exiles, and then by an ever widening circle. These days of mourning, of fasting and wailing bore witness both to the awakening of the exiles from their apathy and to their repentance, and

formed the first post-exilic national days of memorial. This deep sense of repentance produced a new kind of psalm, that may be called the Penitential Psalms. Just as after the departure from Egypt during the wandering in the wilderness, the younger generation was reared in faith in God and in zeal for the aim set before it; so, during the Babylonian exile, the youth was stirred by the desire to return to the God of their fathers. After the exodus, the work of education was accomplished by the great personality of Moses; in Babylonia it was brought about by a literature. The number of the faithful, or "those who were zealous for the word of the Lord," "those who sought the Lord," constantly increased. The "Meek" or Anavim, of course, formed the nucleus of the faithful. They mourned the loss of Jerusalem and the former glory, styled themselves the "sorrowers after Zion," and the thought of Jerusalem was uppermost in their minds. They loved the very stones and yearned after the very dust of the holy city. One of the poetic Levites gave expression to the feelings which animated them when he sang so pathetically:

> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
> Let my right hand forget her cunning;
> If I do not remember thee,
> Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
> If I prefer not Jerusalem
> Above my chief joy.
>
> (Psalm 137:5-6.)

Those who mourned for Zion turned their faces toward Jerusalem during prayer, as though the site of the former temple still retained its holiness. As "those who were zealous for the word of the Lord" could not offer sacrifices in a strange country,

prayer gradually assumed the place of sacrifice. A smaller or larger number assembled thrice daily for the purpose of prayer and thus formed a community. The house of worship replaced the temple. What inspired the regenerated exiles with still greater enthusiasm was the fact that many heathens accepted their teachings and sought admission into the covenant of Israel. This was brought about by the unselfish devotion and enthusiasm of some of the exiles; and this acquisition reacted favorably upon the other exiles. They began to love their God and His law all the more when they saw that even heathens were eager to adopt their faith. Hardly two decades after the death of Jeremiah and Ezekiel who so often complained of the "heart of flint" of their people, their regeneration was accomplished in part. The literature made accessible to them, the Pentateuch and the Prophets, acted as a rejuvenating source, refreshing the soul and softening the heart. The new spirit which stirred the hearts of the people had, meanwhile, to be proven, tested and strengthened by struggle and suffering. The opportunity for the test soon presented itself.

Another portion of the exiles, especially among the aristocratic families, not only persisted in its former perversities but borrowed new ones from its surroundings. The gigantic capital of Babylonia and the wide world empire of the Chaldeans, exerted a charm upon these aristocrats, opened larger vistas before them, and gave them an opportunity to develop their abilities. As Babylon was a great commercial centre, the wealthy among the exiles began to engage in commercial enterprises and accumulated wealth rapidly. With wealth came luxury, and the exiles who had become rich began to imitate the effeminate life of the Babylonians, adopted also the Babylonian cults, pre-

pared a table with food as offering to Gad, god of fortune, and filled the jar of wine to Meni, goddess of fate, that they might prosper them in their undertakings. These prosperous merchants identified themselves with Babylonian life so completely that they forgot their home and Jerusalem entirely, and did not care to hear about a restoration to their own country. They wanted to be and remain Babylonians, and scorned those who were enthusiastic about Jerusalem. This was the dark side as opposed to the bright side of the change which was then taking place in the community of the exiles. On the one side there was fervent piety, glowing zeal for the Law, and fantastic dreams of an idealized Jerusalem; and on the other side, selfish interests, a passion for pleasures, and apathy to the memories of old. These two classes, estranged from each other, had nothing in common outside of their common descent. While the one class was lamenting the loss of Zion and indulging in dreams of the future, the other class cared neither for Israel's past nor for Israel's future, and was well content with the present that was smiling favorably on them.

This contrast was emphasized more strongly by the political events that followed. Six years after the violent death of Evil-merodach, the great friend of the exiles, his murderer was, in turn, removed by a Chaldean nobleman, Nabonad, who ascended the throne (555 B. C. E.). Some years before, a Persian warrior, Cyrus, overthrew the Median king Astyages, his father-in-law, and conquered the Median kingdom with its capital, Ecbatana, together with its dependencies. The pious and enthusiastic among the Babylonian exiles regarded these events as an indication that the salvation of Judah was at hand, since both Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophesied a restoration of the exiles to their

homes. It seems that they turned to Nabonad with the petition that he permit the captives to return to their homes. Nabonad, upon his ascension to the throne, permitted a Phoenician nobleman of the royal house of Merbal, upon the request of the Phoenicians, to return to his home and to ascend the throne of Tyre; and upon the death of this king a few years later, he granted the same privileges to his brother Hiram. Would not Nabonad grant the same favor to the exiles of Judah? Shaltiel, the son of King Jehoiachin, may have presented this petition to the crowned upstart, and the Judahn favorites of the court may have supported it. Nabonad, however, refused this request.

This refusal kindled a burning hatred against Babel and its king in the hearts of the patriotically inclined exiles, and this burning hatred was not kept a secret but found expression in word and deed. The disgust which these patriots, loyal to the God of their fathers, felt for idolatry, extended to the country itself. Babylonia was a "land full of images, proud of its idols" which were an abomination in the eyes of the regenerated exiles, and they gave public expression to their disgust when they came in contact with the Chaldeans. "Thus shall ye say unto them," said one preacher, "the gods that did not create heaven and earth, shall perish from the earth and from beneath the heavens" (Jer. 10:11). They made sport of the Babylonian gods, and prophetic voices were heard announcing the speedy downfall of the sinful empire. They followed the military progress of Cyrus with eagerness, for they realized that a conflict between the rising Medio-Persian empire and Babylonia was inevitable. Cyrus undertook a campaign against Croesus, king of Lydia, who had formed an offensive and defensive alliance with Nabonad and with Amasis of Egypt. Anticipating

that they would be attacked in turn, these kings sought to strengthen themselves by a mutual alliance. This alliance, however, incited the Persian conqueror still more to break the independence of Babylonia that bordered on his kingdom. A prophet foretold that Babylonia would share the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, that the Medians would put an end to the Chaldean empire, and that the king himself would meet with a horrible fate. Nabonad was filled with wrath against the exiles when he was informed of these utterances. He persecuted the patriotic and the pious with great cruelty. Some of them were condemned to hard labor, others were thrown in dark dungeons or put to torture, while the most zealous, who dared speak of the destruction of the Chaldean empire and of idolatry at the hands of the Persian conqueror, suffered a martyr's death. Joshua, the son of Jozadak, a grandson of the high priest Seraiah who was killed at the fall of Jerusalem, was condemned to death by fire, and his escape was considered miraculous.

The victims of persecution who belonged to the circle of Anavim (the Meek) bore their suffering with firmness, and stood the test of martyrdom. A contemporary prophet, who regarded the Anavim as the essence of the nation, describes their persecution in few but forceful lines, and speaks of them as though the nation as a whole had undergone these trials. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:3-7).

The Anavim gave expression to their sorrows intermingled with the hope of salvation in several

psalms which were written in this period of persecution. The well-to-do classes, to avert suspicion from themselves, withdrew more and more from their fellow exiles and adhered still more closely to the Babylonian habits and customs. They even turned with hatred against their patriotic brethren and rendered their lot still more bitter. They regarded the faithful as fanatic madmen who must be rendered harmless. As a result of this estrangement and desertion, the rich classes were allowed to live in peace, to increase their possessions, and to enjoy their prosperity.

The thriving and prosperity of these evil doers, as the pious called them, and, on the other hand, the sufferings of the God-fearing Anavim, presented a baffling puzzle to those who sympathized with the tendencies of the regeneration, but who had not yet reached to the height of firm conviction. The psalmists and the gnomic poets of the day who added introductory and concluding chapters to the older collections of Proverbs,* laid down the cardinal principle that happiness and misfortune were conditioned by the moral and religious life. The psalmist maintained on the one hand: "When the wicked spring as the grass and when all workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever" (Ps. 91:8); and, on the other hand: "I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25). The gnomic poets taught: "The upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it" (Prov. 2:22). Such views, however, held out small comfort to the weak.

* Chapters 1-9, the end of 22, and Chapters 23-24 of the Book of Proverbs date from the exile, and form the Introduction and the Conclusion to the Proverbs of Solomon.

Conflicting as they did with the facts of every day reality, such teachings rather endangered than strengthened the moral life of the doubters who complained: "Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocence" (Ps. 73:12-13). The great problem of the apparent injustice prevailing in the universe which disturbed the equanimity of the thinking exiles, demanded a satisfactory solution. And this task was undertaken by an unknown poet who, in the form of a dialog between friends who discussed this problem, and in intensely poetic diction and imagery, attempted to offer a solution in the Book of Job.

This poem is a work of art throughout. The thoughts and opinions which the poet presents, some of them regarded as erroneous, others defended as truth, are ascribed by him to different characters. The Book of Job cannot be compared with any other poetic or philosophic production; it is unique. It is not a drama, but a dramatic dialog with an historic introduction and conclusion. The introduction gives the motive of the dialog. In the land of Uz, there lived an upright, God-fearing man by the name of Job who was blessed with children and with wealth, and was held in high esteem by his compatriots. He was benevolent, charitable, generous, a father to the poor, the orphan, the widow; hospitable, just. But Satan, in an assembly of the sons of God, accused Job before the Lord that his piety and goodness were the result solely of the abundance of the blessings he was enjoying. To test Job's character, God permitted Satan to deprive him of all the sources of his happiness. Job soon experienced misfortune upon misfortune. Marauders and lightening destroyed all his property; the house wherein his children were

feasting was torn down by a whirlwind and his children were buried beneath its ruins. Job stood this test with firmness and said resignedly: "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return. God hath given and God hath taken away; blessed be the name of God" (Job 1:21). To test Job's integrity still further, Satan was given the permission to smite Job "with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." Job had to scrape his broken skin with a potsherd; he had no home but sat on a heap of ashes. Even this test he stood with firmness, in spite of his wife to whom he said: "Shall we receive the good at the hand of God and shall we not also receive the evil?" (Job 2:10). He did not blaspheme God; but in his heart he questioned the divine justice, and directed plaints and queries to heaven concerning his innocent suffering.

His three friends who came to comfort him, could not hear in silence Job's reflection upon divine justice, and undertook to defend the moral order of the universe. The poet represents them as men of the older generation who persist in the old views that suffering is the result of sin and that the man of misfortune is necessarily a sinner in spite of his claims to righteousness and piety. They thus insinuated to Job that his virtues could not have been altogether pure, though they palliated the accusation somewhat by adding the thought that no man can be pure in the sight of God before whom the very angels are not pure. At the same time they referred to resurrection, the reawakening to a happier life beyond death, as a solace to the suffering of the pious. The poet makes the friends, the representatives of the older views, repeat, to the point of weariness, the doctrine that suffering presupposes sin. His object is to make the theory of retribution appear absurd. Job's integrity was its

strongest refutation. The poet also questions the doctrine of resurrection; "A man dieth and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep" (Job 14:12). To bring the problem of retribution nearer solution, the poet introduces a young man, Elihu, a representative of newer views. Elihu appears on the scene to defend Job's suspected innocence and attempts to uphold both the justice of God and Job's integrity. The central thought of his exposition is that, while suffering and misfortune are not the consequences of sin, they serve as a warning to those who enjoy happiness not to be led astray by their prosperity.

But even the representative of the younger school of wisdom could not present such a satisfactory solution to the perplexing problem of the moral order of the universe as God himself could. The poet, therefore, makes God himself appear on the scene. From the midst of a storm God speaks to Job, and addresses to him question after question with crushing scorn, in which he shows not only the divine omnipotence but also the divine solicitude for and goodness toward the greatest as well as the smallest creature on the face of the earth. Overpowered by this long series of questions, Job answers: "Behold, I am insignificant, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth; I repent in dust and ashes" (Job 40:4; 42:6). Through the wonders of nature which the poet describes in beautiful and sublime pictures, the sufferer perceives that the universe is governed not by injustice and arbitrariness but by a higher order and direction which man cannot comprehend because of his ignorance and helplessness. To the main riddle of life the poet offers this explanation; suffering is imposed upon the righteous to test their integrity. Job stood his test, therefore God

recompensed him doubly for his losses. Thus, the poet accomplished his task; he allayed doubt and strengthened the wavering and the irresolute. This poetic composition is the first word of religious philosophy and the first attempt at a justification of the ways of God to man. It originated in the circle of Babylonian exiles whose faith was shaken by a problem similar to the one illustrated in the Book of Job. The anonymous author of the book who was as deep a thinker as he was an artist, revealed the higher motive underlying the crucible of suffering through which the exiles had to pass and in which their faith and integrity were tested.

The hour which was to decide the fate of both the Babylonians and the exiles was, meanwhile, drawing nearer. Cyrus was making stupendous preparations for the war against Chaldea, and the anxiety of the exiles grew apace. Several prophets announced in advance the fall of Babylonia and the approaching redemption, but none spoke of these coming events with such a certainty, with such fervent eloquence and in such artistic forms, as did the anonymous prophet, called the Second, or the Babylonian Isaiah. Depth of thought and perfection of form, moving power and melting tenderness, symmetry of construction, poetic imagery and simplicity, are all combined in his orations; and they are delivered in such noble diction and with such warmth of feeling that they are intelligible and appealing at all times, though intended only for that particular period. The aim of the Babylonian Isaiah was to comfort and uplift his suffering contemporaries, and to hold up a lofty mission before them. He wished to prove to them that a nation can, at the same time, be both great and small; wretched and goaded to death yet immortal; a despised slave and a type of nobility. None possessed the power, as this prophet did, to

comfort the community of Judah so tenderly and to uplift it so encouragingly. His words have the effect of balm upon a wound or of a refreshing breeze upon an overheated brow: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfort to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. 40:1-2). The prophet represents Jerusalem as a mother forsaken and bereft of her children on account of her sins, but who still remains faithful to the husband of her youth. In terms of the utmost tenderness he addresses Jerusalem: "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk of the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she had brought forth; neither is there anyone that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up" (Is. 51:17-18). Israel's comfort is to consist not in worldly splendor, in power and dominion, but in his election as the salvation of the world. Israel, the people of God, had been chosen by Him to be his servant and messenger to the nations of the earth, to be a light to the gentiles and to open the eyes of the blind. From the very beginning God had in view the appointment of Israel as His people, His servant, and His apostle; and this was the meaning of the promise made to Abraham that all the families of the earth will be blessed in his descendants. A new moral order was to be introduced on earth as though a new heaven and a new earth were to be created. In this salvation, all the nations, all the ends of the earth were to participate; before the God of Israel every knee will bend and to Him every tongue will give homage.

The poetic eloquence of this prophet glorifies and idealizes this apostle people, the bearer of salvation for all mankind. Can a nation reach a higher state than that of being the guide of mankind on the road of right, truth and salvation? The prophet also points out how this ideal people is to fulfill its apostolic office. The nation appointed as God's messenger was to spread His truth and His laws, not by might and by force, but by example. The apostle nation is to offer itself voluntarily as a martyr and as a sacrifice for its ideals, is to remain steadfast in the midst of all persecution, and is to endure in patience all scorn and humiliation. This consciously borne martyrdom, the steadfastness on the one hand and the patient resignation on the other, will ultimately lead to the triumph of the teachings of justice which idealized Israel represents, and to the merited reward of the martyr people itself. The nations of the earth themselves will acknowledge that the very suffering, endurance, and self-sacrifice of Israel have accomplished a great purpose and have brought salvation and peace to mankind. The sublime prophet of the exile expresses his fundamental thought in the statement, that the temple of the God of Israel shall in the future become the house of prayer for all nations.

In this manner the Babylonian Isaiah solved the enigma in the career of the people of Israel. Israel undertook the difficult mission of apostleship to the nations, an office that demands suffering and firmness. As a martyr people Israel is an apostle people. Israel was sent into exile for his own good, that he might be purified in the crucible of affliction.

The second Isiah expected the salvation of the nations through Israel to occur in the near future. The fall of the Chaldean empire, of which the

prophets spoke as an assured fact, signified to him the dawn of that salvation; and the redemption of the exiles was to pave the way for its completion. With bitter irony he ridicules the Chaldean gods and scorns the astrologers who boasted that they were able to lift the veil of the future. The redemption of the exiles and their return he paints in most glowing colors and in a lofty poetic strain. The miracles of the exodus will be repeated for the returning exiles; a path will be leveled before them; fountains of water will bubble up in the wilderness to refresh them, and the waste place will be transformed into blooming gardens. Arriving in their former home, the redeemed exiles will rebuild the ruins, restore the deserted cities, change the wilderness into a garden of God, and enjoy their possessions in undisturbed quietude and peace. The spirit which God put upon his people and the words which he put in his mouth, shall not depart from his children and his children's children from now on, even forever.

This prophet of the exile, the presager of the future, gave expression to one great thought that was destined to transform the religious views of mankind in the course of the ages. He emphasized the idea that God was too exalted to be conceived as inhabiting a particular temple, no matter how extensive it might be. Each human heart should be a holy temple of God. "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, where is the house that ye build unto me and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and who is zealous for My word" (Is. 66:1-2).

The prophet speaks of the victories of Cyrus as of an accomplished fact rather than as an event

yet to occur. What he does foretell in a prophetic vision consists in the announcement that Cyrus will permit the exiles to return to their country and to rebuild the temple. The prophet states explicitly in this connection that he is foretelling the future in order that the fulfillment of his prophecy might serve as a proof of divine providence. The Persian victor over Media, Bactria, Lydia, Asia Minor, and over so many other nations, was only the chosen instrument of God for the purpose of redeeming Israel and of hastening the salvation of the Lord.

The reality of the present, however, presented a striking contrast to the ideal future which the prophet painted. The people that was to be the servant of God declined its service; the apostle who was to proclaim the truth was blind and deaf. Instead of cherishing the Law handed down to them, the great mass of the people was either indifferent or disloyal to it. The pious nationalists, the mourners after Zion, were driven to despair by the persecution and sufferings which they endured, and came to the conclusion that God had forsaken his people and had forgotten Zion. The worldly, self-seeking, well-to-do classes did not care to hear of Zion, of the restoration, or of the doctrine of salvation; they hated, mocked at, and even persecuted those who dared speak of redemption and restoration. The great unknown prophet of the exile had, therefore, to undertake the double mission of encouraging the former and endeavoring to reform the latter by soft and harsh words. To the evil doers, sunk in the vices of idolatry, the prophet calls to forsake their ways and to recognize by the signs of the times that the mercy of the Lord was near at hand. The closer he approaches to the end of his prophecies, the harsher becomes the tone of his threats against them. In conclusion, the

prophet describes the redemption and the return, and announces that the scattered remnants of Judah and of Israel will be gathered upon the holy mountain of Jerusalem. All flesh will then come to Jerusalem every Sabbath and every new moon to worship the God of Israel; and they will witness the punishment of the evil doers who will become a disgrace and an abomination.

King Nabonad and the Babylonian people were perhaps not so anxious about the outcome of the war between the Persians and the Babylonians as were the Babylonian exiles. The exiles were swayed alternately by hope and fear, since the very life or the death of the nation was to be decided by the conflict between the two great powers. The Babylonians, on the other hand, looked upon the war preparations of Cyrus with a certain indifference. But before they realized it, the great army of Cyrus, eager for battle, stood at the very gates of the capital; and, through the river bed, in the silence of the night, penetrated into the heart of the city while its inhabitants were indulging in festivities and in drunken orgies. When day broke, Babylon was filled with the enemy and all resistance was useless. Thus fell Babylon, (539 B. C. E.), the sinful city, after a war of two years, just as the prophets of Judah had foretold. But the horrible judgment which the prophets had announced against the king and people of Babylonia did not take place since Cyrus was a generous conqueror, though the abominable Chaldean idolatry received its death blow with the fall of the empire. The worship of the conquering nations (the Medes and the Persians) was pure in comparison with that of Babylonia; they had only two or three gods and held in horror the image worship of the Babylonians.

The fall of Babylon cured the exiles of their

idolatry, thoroughly and for all time. Witnessing, as they did, the utter helplessness of Bel, Nebo, Merodach, and the other Babylonian gods, and the literal fulfillment of the prophetic words, the conquest of Babylon brought about a complete revolution in the religious attitude of the exiles of Judah; their heart of stone was changed into a heart of flesh. From that time on, the entire people, even the sinners and the wordly minded, turned to God. The Meek, the mourners after Zion, were no longer objects of hatred and contempt, but were treated rather with reverence, and were placed at the head of the community. Immediately upon the conquest of Babylon, the nationalists began to take active steps to bring into realization the hope of the redemption and the return promised by the prophets.

Cyrus took possession of the throne and palace of Babylon, proclaimed himself King of Babylonia, and regarded himself as the successor of the Babylonian kings who preceded him. He attached so much importance to the conquest of Babylon that he began to count his reign from that event (538), though he had already ruled twenty years over Media and Persia. He retained all the servants of the palace who had served under Nabonad, and among them the eunuchs of the royal family of Judah who had remained faithful to their religion. These eunuchs or some prominent pagans who had joined the Judahn community, took immediate steps, probably in conjunction with Zerubbabel (the grandson of King Jehoiachin), to obtain from Cyrus the freedom of their people; and their efforts were crowned with success. The exiles who had been incarcerated by Nabonad on account of their religious loyalty were set at liberty, and Cyrus also granted the people of Judah the privilege to return to their former homes, and to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. With the conquest of Baby-

lon, Cyrus gained possession of all the provinces to the Mediterranean and the border of Egypt which Nebuchadnezzar had annexed to his empire. Judah was, therefore, a part of Persia, and Cyrus could do with it what he pleased. What were the arguments advanced by the petitioners of such an apparently bold request as the granting of a certain measure of political independence to the people of Judah? And what induced Cyrus to grant that request in such a generous manner? Was it mere yielding to a momentary impulse? Was the Persian conquerer eunuch moved to this step, as Josephus tells us, by a Judahn eunuch who read before the king the prophecies of Isaiah in which that prophet spoke of Cyrus and his victories and in which he foretold that that king would permit the exiles to return to their country? Was he so deeply impressed by the conception of God held by the exiles, which approached that of the Persians, that they gained his favor on that account? Whatever the motives may have been that led him to his decision, it was certainly astonishing that, immediately after he took possession of Babylon, Cyrus proclaimed throughout his empire, both through heralds and by written edict, that the exiles of Judah were permitted to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. Those who remained behind were ordered to assist their returning brethren with gold, silver, and beasts of burden. Mithradat, the royal treasurer, received the command to hand over to the returning exiles all the holy vessels of the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had taken as booty and which were kept as a trophy in the Temple of Belus.

As soon as the permission for the return was granted, the leaders of the community assembled to organize their forces and to remove the anticipated difficulties and obstacles. At the head of the

movement stood two men of about the same age, who were entitled to leadership on account of their descent. One was Zerubbabel (called Sheshbazzar in Chaldean), a grandson of King Jehoiachin, hence a descendant of David; the other was Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and grandson of the last high priest, Seraiah. To these two, ten other men were added, constituting twelve leaders, to represent the twelve tribes in a measure. Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel governor (Pehah) or regent over the territory which the returned exiles were to occupy with the intention of promoting him to the dignity of royalty later on. All who desired to return were to report to the twelve leaders. The number of those who were ready to return was rather insignificant compared with that of the Israelites who went out of Egypt, but it was greater than could be expected. Forty-two thousand, three hundred and sixty men, women, and children over the age of twelve, joined the expedition. The largest number consisted of members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; then came four groups of priests (about four thousand), and about three hundred Levites. A sprinkling of members from other tribes and some proselytes made up the rest.

The joy of those who were preparing for the return to their home was unbounded. It appeared to them as a sweet dream that they were found worthy to set foot again upon the sacred soil of Jerusalem, to rebuild that city and to re-establish the temple. This occurrence created a stir even among other nations who regarded it as a miracle. A psalm written on that occasion vividly describes the feelings of the returning exiles:

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion
We were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,

And our tongue with singing.
Then said they among the heathen,
'The Lord hath done great things for them,'
The Lord hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad."

(Psalm 126:1-3.)

As the nationalists were preparing to take advantage of the liberty granted to them and to return to Jerusalem, a poet admonished them in a psalm to examine themselves as to whether they were worthy of such divine mercy. Only the clean of hand and the pure of heart were worthy of standing in God's holy place (Psalm 24). But who was there to distinguish the ones from the others?

CHAPTER II

THE RETURN AND THE NEW JERUSALEM

(537-420 B. C. E.)

In the same month in which, eight or nine centuries ago, the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, their descendants left Babylonia after a captivity of forty-nine years to take possession again of the long-lost home and of the longed-for Jerusalem. It was a fateful moment, fraught with deep significance for thousands of years to come.

The exiles departed not like trembling slaves who had just broken their chains, but with a joyous heart, in a lofty, inspired mood, and filled with ideal hopes. Choirs of singers led them, singing triumphal songs, to the accompaniment of the harp and the cymbal, the opening lines and the refrains of which were: "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His kindness endureth forever." The many Judaeans who remained in Babylonia, rich merchants and property holders, evinced their sympathy with their departing brethren by providing them with an armed escort, and by rich gifts to be spent in the rebuilding of their old home. Cyrus sent a thousand horsemen to protect them on their long journey from the attacks of the robber bands that infested the highways, as well as to

force those people that had settled in Judah in the interim to vacate the country in order to make room for the returned exiles. The recently announced prophecy: "Ye shall depart in joy and be brought home in peace" (Is. 55:12) was fulfilled. The journey of more than six hundred miles between Babylonia and Judah was accomplished safely and uneventfully. The rich rode on horses; of the poor, old men and children were provided with asses and camels; the great mass of the people wended its way on foot.

The first sight of the long-cherished land, after a journey of four of five months, filled the returned exiles with unbounded joy. The prophecies, the hopes, the dreams had become a reality! Their great joy, however, was soon mingled with sorrow. The country was a waste, and the holy city, Jerusalem, a heap of ruins, and would have to be built anew! A large part of the country was occupied by foreigners; by Samaritans in the north, and by the Idumeans in the south. While these foreigners were compelled to vacate, at least to some extent, the territory occupied by them, only the Benjaminites were able to acquire their former possession in its entirety. The tribe of Judah could obtain only a portion of its former territory.

The beginning of the new commonwealth was small and wretched. Its population of forty thousand was not large enough to spread itself over an extensive territory; the returning colonists, therefore, grouped themselves in a circle around Jerusalem. But this confinement had the advantage of keeping the rural population in close touch with the capital, and enabled them to learn of any important event that transpired and to participate in it.

But even though the smallness of the beginning

and the extreme territorial limitation of their settlement tended to depress the spirits of the returned colonists and to destroy the glowing hopes which the prophets had kindled in their hearts in the last days of the exile, unexpected events soon set in that reawakened their enthusiasm for the rehabilitation of the commonwealth. From the many lands of their dispersion, from west, south and north, from Egypt, Phoenicia, and even from the Greek archipelago whither they had migrated voluntarily or had been sold as slaves, Judaean exiles flocked to Jerusalem, like children gathering around their long-lost mother. A considerable number of proselytes, "great and small," of various nationalities, also joined the colonists and entered into a union with them. These proselytes, acknowledging the God of Israel, and desirous of following His law, were received with joy, and inspired the young commonwealth with self-confidence.

Upon the approach of the seventh month in which several holidays fall in accordance with the Law and with custom, a vast throng of colonists assembled in Jerusalem, and, under the direction of Zerubbabel the governor, and Jeshua the high priest, took the first step towards the restoration of the commonwealth by erecting an altar of stone. This altar was to be the forerunner of the temple, the erection of which had been contemplated long since that it might form the pivot of the new commonwealth but could not as yet be accomplished on account of the lack of building material. The altar was consecrated by the offering of sacrifices, and by hymns of praise sung by the Levites:

O come, let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us shout before the Rock of our salvation.
(Ps. 95:1.)

Declare His glory among the heathen
His wonders among all people.
(Ps. 96:3.)

Confounded be all they who serve graven images
That boast themselves of idols
(Ps. 97:7.)

O sing unto the Lord a new song;
For He hath done marvelous things:
His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory.
The Lord hath made known His salvation:
He openly showed His righteousness in the sight of all the nations.
(Ps. 98:1-2.)

The leaders soon took the necessary measures for the erection of the temple. The rich gifts which the exiles brought with them were used for the hiring of laborers and artisans. Cedars were brought from the Lebanon as in Solomon's times. Stone was hewn out of the limy soil; and when a sufficient quantity had been prepared, the corner stone of the temple was laid with great solemnity in the presence of the leaders, the heads of families, and a vast concourse of the people "in the second month of the second year of the return." The priests, clad in their sacred vestments, blew the trumpets; the Levites of the house of Asaph sang a psalm of thanksgiving; and the people shouted for joy that the long-yearned-for day had finally arrived. But the shouts of triumph were mingled with tears of sorrow on the part of the old men who still remembered the beauty and the glory of the Temple of Solomon and to whom the new temple appeared "as naught."

The enthusiasm created by the beginning of the erection of the temple soon spent itself and cares set in. Close to the border of Judah there

lived the mixed population of the Samaritans or Cuthites. Converted by the Israelitish priests of the temple of Bethel, they adopted the Israelitish cult in part, but preserved to some extent the idolatrous practices which they had brought with them from their original homes. The chiefs of these Samaritans now appeared unexpectedly at Jerusalem and asked to be permitted to participate in the building of the temple, and to be received as members of the Judaean community. The elders of Judah, after careful deliberation, decided to refuse the request, and Zerubbabel, the governor, notified the Samaritan chiefs of the decision. The Samaritans were incensed, and assumed an attitude of bitter hostility towards the young commonwealth that brought many evils upon it. On the one hand, they endeavored to discourage the Judaeans with whom they came in contact from continuing the building of the temple, and, on the other hand, they induced the Persian satraps to assume an unfriendly attitude towards the colonists by accusing them of hostile intentions against Persia. Up to the time of his death (529 B. C. E.) Cyrus was absorbed in foreign wars, far away from home, and paid little attention to the provinces west of the Euphrates. The satraps of those provinces, therefore, did what they pleased, and it was they who assisted the Samaritans in their designs against the Judaeans. Cambyses who succeeded Cyrus, and was planning the conquest of Egypt and Carthage, needed the friendship of the Philistines through whose territory he had to pass on his way to Egypt; and the Philistines took advantage of the opportunity to poison his mind against the colonists. As a result of all these machinations the work on the erection of the temple was interrupted for fifteen years. The returned Judaeans thus found themselves in the

same unfavorable condition which their ancestors, the Israelites, experienced upon their entrance into the Land of Canaan. The territory which they occupied was encompassed by hostile neighbors on all sides. They were not even in a condition to fight as were their forefathers in the days of Joshua.

Under these untoward circumstances many members of the community turned their attention to their own interests and neglected those of the commonwealth. The heads of the families, the nobles, erected for themselves magnificent mansions out of the material, it seems, that had been provided for the building of the temple. A failure of crops for several years in succession caused by drought and hail, reduced the population to the extreme of wretchedness. Much was sown but little was harvested; there was a lack of food and of garments. The moral confusion consequent upon the physical suffering was even worse. There was, indeed, no relapse into idolatry: the Judaeans were cured of that for all time; but petty offences and vices appeared on the surface. For a while, selfishness had the upper hand. The bonds of sympathy and kindness between man and man were broken. Under such conditions even the better element of the returned Judaeans was beginning to lose its hope and its faith. Was this physical suffering and moral degeneration to be the end of the glowing promises made by the prophets?

The death of Cambyses (in 521), and the succession of Darius, the third of the Persian kings (521-485), brought about a favorable turn in the affairs of Judah. Darius was unlike Cambyses; and resembled Cyrus in mildness and generosity. A curious legend has it that Zerubbabel had returned to Persia, and had succeeded, by his wisdom, in winning the favor of Darius to such an

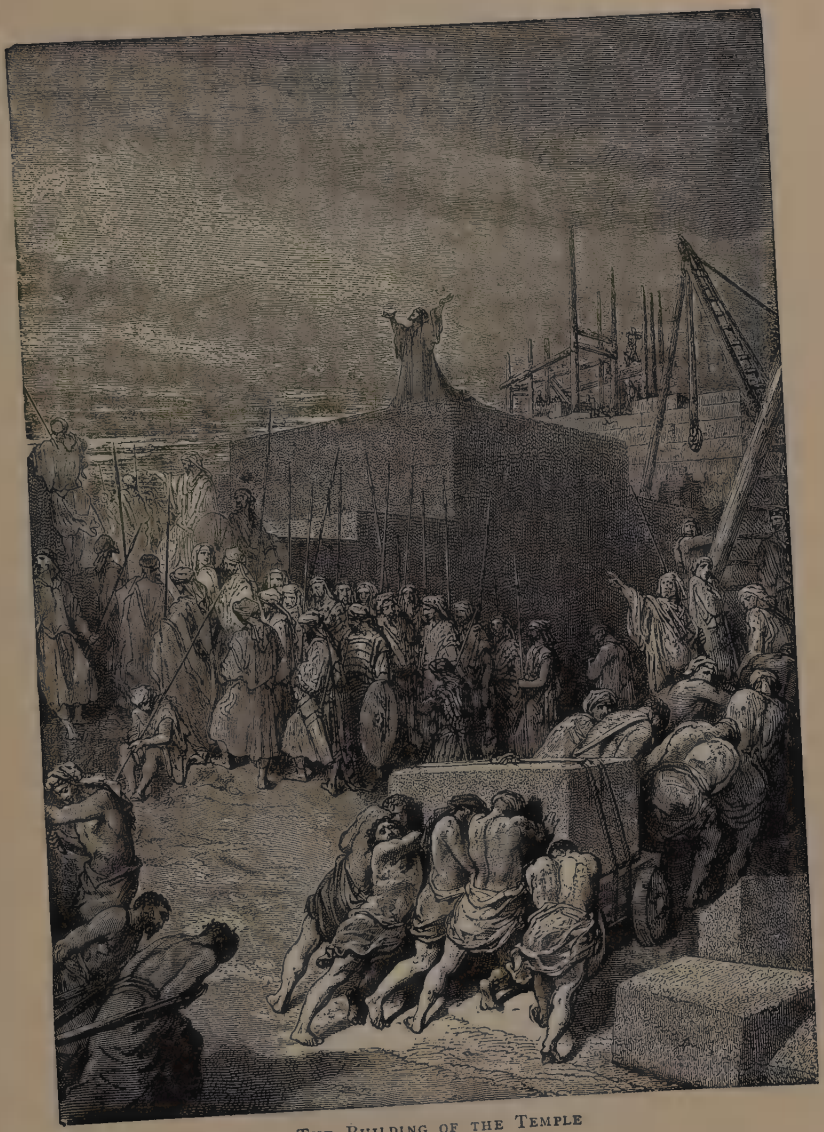
extent that the king granted him the permission to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple at the expense of the royal treasury. As a matter of fact, the work of rebuilding did not proceed so rapidly. When the turmoil of war in the proximity of Judah ceased upon the death of Cambyses, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the leaders of the people, did, indeed, contemplate the resumption of building operations. But the elders of the people were rather lukewarm, and insisted that "the time of the building of the House of God had not yet come." It was only owing to the zeal of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah that the work was continued. In the course of five months (in 520), these two prophets spoke to the people again and again, and succeeded in reawakening their courage and their zeal. After an interruption of fifteen years the building of the temple was finally resumed.

When the temple which was four years in building (519-516) was finally completed, after so many obstacles and interruptions, it was dedicated shortly before the Feast of Passover, amidst the joyous acclaims of the people, just seventy years after the destruction of the Temple of Solomon. The entire population assembled in Jerusalem to witness the dedication of the temple which was, henceforth, to be the centre and the beacon light of the community. Three weeks after the dedication the entire community celebrated the Passover, and the sincere proselytes were allowed to participate in it.

After the completion of the temple, the young community was animated by the spirit of the Law and the prophets, and was eagerly striving for unity. In spite of that, discord soon set in that gave rise to constant friction. It was the struggle for supremacy between the two leaders, Zerubbabel

and Jeshua. Zerubbabel the governor, a descendant of the royal house of David, represented the temporal power; Jeshua, a descendant of the priestly house of Aaron, represented the spiritual power. That each should encroach upon the domain of the other was inevitable. The people loved Zerubbabel because he was to them the living embodiment both of the past glories of the house of David as well as of the Messianic hope of the future announced by the prophets. The prophet Haggai styled him the "chosen of God and His signet ring" (Haggai 2: 23). But this very popularity of Zerubbabel proved a source of danger, since it lent color to the accusation of their enemies that the people of Judah were disloyal to Persia, and were plotting to restore the throne of David. On the other hand, the prophet Zechariah placed the priesthood above the house of David, and, as a result, dissensions broke out between the two leaders and their respective followers. As long as both continued in authority peace was impossible. One or the other had to abdicate. Under the circumstances, the high priest was evidently more indispensable than the prince. In all probability, Zerubbabel left the country, either out of disappointment, or out of an unselfish desire to promote the interests of harmony.

With the departure of Zerubbabel, the direction of the commonwealth remained in the hands of the high priest Jeshua, and, after his death, in those of his son Joiakim. Whether it was a change for the better must remain a mooted question. While nothing detrimental to the character of the first two high priests is reported, they have rendered no conspicuous services to the community. The civil authority passed into the hands not of the high priests but into those of the viceroy or governor of Judah (Pehah) appointed by the Persian



THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

By Doré

kings or by the satraps of Syria or Phoenicia. The Pehahs did not reside in Jerusalem, but repaired thither from time to time to dispense justice, and to settle disputes. Some of them who were ill disposed towards the people of Judah, and were instigated by the Samaritans, created confusion in the new commonwealth by preferring charges of disloyalty against the Judaeans because some few of them still cherished the hope of the restoration of their kingdom under the house of David. Such accusations began to be made immediately upon the death of Darius, under his successor Xerxes (Ahasuerus, 485-464). In addition, the governors oppressed the people by means of exorbitant taxes called the "Bread of the Pehah." The condition of the people of Judah, of the second and third generation after the return, grew worse from day to day.

To gain relief from the constant annoyances which their hostile neighbors caused them, the leading families of Judah took a step which later involved the people in many entanglements. They made overtures of friendship to their neighbors, or encouraged those who sought their friendship; and, as a guarantee of friendly relationship, intermarried with them. Just as upon the first entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, the necessity of peaceful intercourse with the neighboring peoples led to intermarriage; so, upon the second entrance, the same necessity led to the same step. There was, however, one important difference. Whereas the Canaanites were sunk in an abominable idolatry, and led the Israelites astray by their vicious habits, the new neighbors of the new commonwealth, especially the Samaritans, had given up their idolatrous habits, and were sincerely desirous of participating in the divine worship of Jerusalem. They were in reality, or wished to become, proselytes,

and were eager to become an integral part of the communal and religious life of Judah. Should they be rejected with contempt forever? The most influential members of the Judaean community were in favor of admitting the strangers into the covenant, and the then high priest, either Joiakim or his son Eliashib, sanctioned it.

As a result of this closer union, many intermarriages with the Samaritans and other neighboring peoples took place, even in the family of the high priests. Samaritans and Judaeans were about to become amalgamated into one people. Prominent Judaeans intermarried even with the Moabites and Ammonites, formerly the inexorable enemies of the Israelites, which the Deuteronomic law explicitly interdicted. Only the Idumeans held aloof, though they lived in closer proximity to Judah than formerly. Driven out from their mountainous country and even from their capital, Petra, by the Nabateans, a semi-Arabic and semi-Syrian people, the Idumeans settled in the south of Judah, in the former possessions of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, and occupied even the important city of Hebron. The territory they now occupied was henceforth called Idumea, while their original possession received the name of Nabatea. The enmity of Edom to Jacob continued even in post-exilic times. The Samaritans, on the other hand, were very sincere in their desire to join the community of Judah. Their chief was at that time a very shrewd and resourceful man by name of Sanballat who was earnestly determined to identify himself with the temple and with the God of Israel, and who did not hesitate to resort to force and to trickery in order to accomplish his purpose. At his side stood Tobiah, an Ammonite, whose daughter had married into the aristocratic family of Arach, and whose son had taken as his wife the

THE SAMARITANS SHOWING THEIR SCROLL OF THE LAW

daughter of Meshullam, son of Berachiah, one of the nobles of Judah. Inasmuch as such intermarriages were explicitly prohibited by the Deuteronomic law (Deut. 23:4), the high priest and the other representatives of the community quieted their conscience by interpreting that law to suit their convenience. A fraction of the Judaean nobility did, indeed, refuse to yield to the general tendency to intermarry, and protested against the violation of the law. The poets and singers who cherished the Hebrew tongue and the ancient sacred literature, also protested against the absorption of foreign elements into the Judaean community. They realized the danger threatening their beloved language, since the offspring of mixed marriages were no longer able to speak Hebrew, but used the Ashdod dialect and other foreign languages. Being in the minority, their protests went unheeded. But when a powerful leader arrived in Jerusalem from the exile, this minority raised its voice loudly, and brought about a reaction that led to many unpleasant complications.

Historic transitions, as a rule, take place so imperceptibly that the generation living within the period of transition hardly realizes that the old has given place to the new, and hardly feels the change that is taking place within itself, in its views, in its customs, and even in its language. Such a transition, imperceptible at first but gradually all pervading, took place among the Judaeans in the first half of the fifth century. The change originated in Babylonia, but, within a short time, made itself felt also in Judah and Jerusalem.

A considerable portion of the descendants of the exile remained in Babylonia either because their material interests demanded their presence, or for other reasons. They manifested their enthusiasm for the return and for the reconstruction of the

commonwealth by the rich gifts which they contributed towards the work of reconstruction. But though they did not return to Jerusalem, they endeavored none the less to preserve their identity and their national character. They separated themselves from their surroundings, married only within their own circles, and followed their traditional teaching as the guide of their life. Just because they lived in a strange environment, and were far removed from their mother country, they devoted themselves with particular zeal to the precepts of their faith in order that that faith might become the bond of union that was to unite them into a distinct nationality. Because they could not bring sacrifices or observe those laws which were peculiar to the temple, they devoted themselves with redoubled zeal to the observance of those laws which did not depend upon the temple, such as the Sabbath, the festivals, circumcision and the dietary laws. They undoubtedly had houses of prayer wherein they assembled on stated occasions. They had, indeed, adopted the Aramaic or Chaldaic vernacular as the language of common intercourse; still the Hebrew was not altogether strange to them. The national literature which they possessed and which they read all the more zealously since it was the only source of their religious instruction, made them familiar with the sacred language. As a result of such study, the Pentateuch, with its prescriptions of laws and duties, became a book of great authority. During the exile, the prophetic writings were more popular because they proved a source of comfort and consolation; but as soon as the exiles were in a position to embody their sentiments into action, and to give to their life a distinct character, the book of law had to be sought out and consulted. The Torah or the Law that had been so long neglected and but rarely consulted at

home, came into honor and prominence in a foreign country. In Judah the Sabbath was not observed so strictly as it was in Babylonian and Persian communities. This zeal for the fulfillment of the Law found embodiment in Ezra the Scribe who gave a new direction to the course of Judaean history. Ezra, however, did not stand alone; he was assisted by a class of men well versed in the Law, the Sopherim or Scribes.

Ezra, the creator of the religio-legal movement, was well fitted, by descent, to arouse an enthusiasm for the Torah. He was a descendant of Hilkiah, the high priest, who had found the Deuteronomic code which resulted in the reformation under King Josiah; and was a great-grandson of the high priest Seraiah who was executed by Nebuchadnezzar, and whose sons brought the Torah with them to Babylonia. Ezra thus had the opportunity of familiarizing himself with the contents of the book early in life, and he devoted himself to it more closely than any other member of his family. Having absorbed its contents, Ezra determined to reduce the prescribed laws to practice. Beginning with himself, he endeavored to fulfill conscientiously all the prescriptions laid down by the Torah for the conduct of the individual with reference to garments, food, and the holidays. He then began to teach the Torah to the people, explained the laws in a simple and comprehensible manner, and urged upon his listeners to practice them. He regarded the Torah as the direct revelation of God through Moses, and placed it infinitely above the writings of the prophets. His great enthusiasm inspired the communities of Babylonia and of Persia with his own zeal and convictions. They began to regard Ezra as an authority, and paid heed to him more willingly than the prophets formerly gained with all their fiery eloquence.

The motives that led Ezra to Jerusalem are not definitely known. He may have been informed that the Judaeans were indifferent to the Law, and he might have hoped that his presence among them would inspire them with greater zeal for its observance. Again, he might have merely yielded to the impulse of his heart to go to Jerusalem that he might fulfill there those religious obligations which the temple and the sacrificial cult demanded. At any rate, Ezra determined upon the journey and was accompanied by more than sixteen hundred men, besides women and children, members of the leading families that had remained in Babylonia. Among them was a great-grandson of Zerubbabel of the royal house of David. Those who did not participate in the expedition presented Ezra with rich gifts of gold, silver and costly vessels for the temple. Even the king, Artaxerxes (Longimanus), and the many Persian nobles following his example, sent along costly gifts for the sanctuary of Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, the God of Israel found many worshippers among the Persians and other nations at that time. In addition to his rich gifts, Artaxerxes gave Ezra letters of recommendation to the satraps of the country through which he had to pass, as well as to the governor of Judah. The king was even ready to send along an armed convoy with the expedition to guard it against the attacks of highwaymen. Ezra, however, declined this offer, and assured the king that the God of Israel would protect him and his companions from all danger.

The arrival at Jerusalem of Ezra and his large number of followers must have created a sensation, coming as they did, laden with gifts, full of enthusiasm, and with royal recommendations. Ezra's fame as a student and interpreter of the Law must undoubtedly have preceded him, and

he was treated with great consideration. As soon as Ezra assumed the office of religious teacher, those who objected to intermarriages, particularly with the Ammonites and the Moabites, laid their complaints before him against those who had contracted such marriages. Ezra was horrified at the news of such occurrences. He held the view that the people of Israel formed a "holy seed" which becomes defiled by intermarriage with foreign, even non-idolatrous peoples. According to his interpretation of the Law, pagans who adopted the Law of Israel should be received into the community not on terms of absolute equality but as a separate group. Pagan proselytes should be treated like the former Gibeonites (later called Nethinim) who had been identified with the political and religious life of Israel for more than a thousand years and had still been kept as a separate group and had been excluded from intermarriage with the native Israelites. Ezra was led to that view not by a vain aristocratic pride, but by the apprehension, well justified in those days, that the reception of numerous proselytes and half-proselytes who did not pass through the "crucible of affliction" as did the descendants of Abraham, might destroy the moral and religious acquisitions of Israel, and give the preponderance to foreign elements. This fear mastered him completely. Grief-stricken at the offense committed by a large portion of the community—an offense that to him appeared destructive, and endangering the very existence of the community, Ezra rent his garments, tore the hair of his head and beard, and sat as one dazed till evening without touching any food. He then betook himself to the temple; and, on his knees, offered supplications and made confession for the people who were still steeped in guilt in spite both of the chastisement

and the numerous mercies they had received at the hands of God.

Ezra's supplications and confession of sin, uttered with profound feeling and amidst sobs and tears, made a deep impression upon the multitude of the people that gathered about the kneeling teacher, and men and women joined their tears with his. Deeply affected, Shechaniah, one of the people present, gave utterance to a significant suggestion. What had been done can be undone. He said: "Let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and such as are born of them" (Ezra 10:3). Ezra immediately took up the suggestion, and demanded of the heads of the families to take a solemn oath, in the presence of the sanctuary, that they would discard their foreign wives and the children born of such marriages. It was a fateful moment that was to decide the future of the people of Judah. Ezra erected a barrier that was to separate Israel from the world that surrounded him. Under the threat of excommunication and forfeiture of property in case of disobedience, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were the first to separate themselves from their foreign wives and children, and those of other cities soon followed their example. Many, however, out of love to their wives and out of consideration for their wives' parents and relatives, offered resistance to the order of Ezra.

The execution of the order of separation from the neighboring nations and from the Samaritans in particular, led to many evil consequences. The God-fearing proselytes who had joined the community in all sincerity, resented most bitterly their exclusion from the God whom they had chosen, and from the temple in the service of which they had hitherto participated. Their friendship for the Judaean community turned into hostility; and

hatred born out of rejected love is the most virulent. The grief of the daughters or sisters who had been discarded by their Judaean husbands, and the sight of the children who had been denied by their own fathers, could not but awaken and deepen the feeling of bitterness in the hearts of their kinsmen. To the misfortune of Judah, Sanballat and Tobiah, the leaders of the excluded element, were men of energy and of resource, who immediately assumed a hostile attitude towards Judah and were determined to participate by force or by trickery in the service of the temple and of the God they themselves honored.

There was, however, one party in Judah that did not approve of the severe attitude of Ezra towards intermarriage, and that maintained that women proselytes might safely be admitted into the community on terms of absolute equality. The learned men of that party cited historic examples from Israel's past that tended to prove that marriages of Israelites with foreign women were not of rare occurrence. The milder views of this party are embodied in a charming little book that most probably originated at that time—in the book of Ruth. The poetic author narrates an apparently harmless idyl of a prominent family of Bethlehem that migrated to Moab, and of the two sons of that family who married Moabite women. Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of one of her sons, refused to leave Naomi, her mother-in-law, insisting that "thy people are my people, and thy God is my God." Ruth married Boaz, a Judahn, and the son born of this marriage became the ancestor of David, the pious king of Israel. The details of this charming book are artistically elaborated. The poet, however, desired to emphasize two facts: that the royal house of Israel traces its origin to a Moabitish woman, and that the Moabitess, once having identified her-

self with the Judahn people, and having placed herself beneath the wings of the God of Israel, cherished and practiced all the virtues as only a daughter of Israel could. The application of the idyl to the burning question of that day was so evident that no explicit reference was necessary. Were there not among the discarded wives also women of the type of Ruth? Should the House of David, the royal clan, one of whose ancestors had married a Moabitish woman, therefore be excluded from the people of Israel?

Such arguments, however, were of no avail. Ezra and the ruling senate of Jerusalem persisted with severity in the exclusion from the community of all elements that were not of Judahn descent, "of the holy seed." Attempts at compromise failed; the zealots of Jerusalem would not yield; and it came to open hostility and friction that continued for many years (457-444).

But as Ezra was a man of ideas rather than a man of action, while Sanballat and his associates were men of determination and were urged on by a passionate hatred of those who caused their expulsion from the community; and since many Judaean families were in secret sympathy with the discarded element, the opponents of Ezra gradually gained the upper hand. The Samaritans annoyed the Judaeans on every possible occasion and they grew so bold as to make an open attack on Jerusalem. It is difficult to account for the temerity of the Samaritans in taking such a step in view of the fact that Ezra was a favorite of Artaxerxes, and that many Judaeans stood high in the Persian court. The Samaritans may have been encouraged by Megabyzus, the satrap of Syria, who rebelled against Artaxerxes and who defeated one Persian army after another sent against him (447 B. C. E.). At any rate, Sanballat led an army against

Jerusalem, made breaches in the walls and burned the gates and many houses. The leaders of Jerusalem were little skilled in the arts of war. As a result, Jerusalem was again a heap of ruins. The temple was spared, indeed, since it was held in reverence by the Samaritans also, but it was deserted. Most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled to the rural towns; the priests and the Levites, deprived of the tithes and other perquisites, forsook the temple and sought for means of sustenance elsewhere. It was an evil time for the commonwealth, re-established hardly a century ago. Many of the nobles made peace with their neighbors, took back their discarded wives, or contracted new marriages. These alliances were solemnized by mutual oaths. For the time being, Ezra's work seems to have been completely undone. The very existence of Judah was in danger. The new commonwealth was on the point of dissolution.

But the zeal which Ezra enkindled was too deep-rooted to be extinguished by this catastrophe. Overwhelmed by sorrow and grief over the misfortune that had befallen Jerusalem, a few men hastened to Persia in search of aid. They counted especially upon the assistance of Nehemiah, the cup-bearer and favorite of Artaxerxes. His kinsman, Hanani, who was an eyewitness of the occurrences at Jerusalem, described to him the appalling desolation of the capital and the chaotic condition of the people. Nehemiah was deeply shocked at the news. He was one of those Judaeans of Persia who were zealous for the Law; Jerusalem was to him an idealized city, protected by God's presence as by walls of fire; and that sacred city had now been defiled like any other earthly city! But Nehemiah quickly recovered himself. He was a man of indefatigable energy and resourceful; and at the Persian court he learned the art of swaying people to

his will. He immediately formed the resolution to go to Jerusalem in person, and to put an end to the wretched conditions prevailing there. His services at court and the very favor he enjoyed militated against his immediate departure. He, therefore, determined to await a favorable opportunity. As his clouded countenance soon betrayed the feelings of his heart, the king inquired one day as to the cause of his grief. Nehemiah determined to seize this favorable opportunity, and he replied: "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed by fire?" (Neh. 2:3); and he expressed the wish to go to Jerusalem and to remedy the evil conditions. Artaxerxes was gracious. He not only gave him leave to undertake the journey, to rebuild the walls, and to restore order in the disorganized commonwealth, but furnished him with letters of recommendation to the royal officials who were instructed to put no obstacles in his way, and to supply him with building material. The king even sent along a guard of infantry and cavalry, and appointed him governor of Judah. The only condition the king imposed was that Nehemiah return to Persia after the expiration of his furlough.

Upon his arrival in Jerusalem (444 B. C. E.), Nehemiah kept himself in seclusion for three days. He wanted first to acquaint himself with the scene of his activity and with the persons with whom he would have to deal. He established his household in princely fashion, for he was a man of great wealth. The purpose of his coming he kept secret at first, and withheld it even from the nobles of Judah since he did not trust them. One night, he and a few of his companions rode secretly about Jerusalem to see the extent of the damage done to the walls, and to formulate a plan for their repair.

Thereupon he assembled the elders and informed them, to their astonishment, that he had been authorized by Artaxerxes not only to repair the walls but also to govern the country, and that it was his aim to remove the reproach from the commonwealth of Judah. The assembled nobles declared their readiness to assist him. Even those who had intermarried with the foreigners and stood in friendly relations with them, affected support. But Nehemiah's undertaking was an exceedingly difficult one. He was to reconstruct a shattered community, the members of which, either out of fear, weakness, selfishness, or other consideration, had lost all power of resistance to danger.

Nehemiah directed his first efforts toward fortifying Jerusalem. The work of reconstruction, under the personal direction of Nehemiah, was apportioned among several rich families and individuals who volunteered to repair certain portions of the wall at their own expense. But the task was a difficult one. The rejected proselytes, with Sanballat and Tobiah at their head, whose hope of recognition as Judaeans Nehemiah destroyed at the very beginning of his activity, made every possible effort to interrupt the work. At first they employed the artifice of casting upon Nehemiah the suspicion that he was forming designs against Persia with the ambitious scheme of making himself king of Judah. Again they sought to discourage the workmen by their sarcastic remarks that the rebuilt walls were so weak that a jackal could break them. But when the walls rose to half their height, the enemies of Judah determined upon a sudden attack on the workmen in order to frustrate their work.

But Nehemiah was soon informed of the intended attack by the very Judaeans who were related to the Samaritans by marriage and in whose

confidence they stood. Nehemiah, therefore, took extraordinary precautions. While some of his men were engaged in building, others, in charge of officers, stood guard, weapons in hand; each workman had a sword girt on his side, and the burden bearers carried their burdens in one hand and a weapon in the other. To hasten the completion of the walls, Nehemiah made his men work from dawn to sunset; while some of his men kept watch within the city. Nehemiah and his guardsmen slept in their clothes while the work was under progress. Nehemiah himself was constantly near the scene of building, with a trumpeter at his side to blow the alarm in case of attack. On account of this vigilance, Sanballat and his associates gave up their plans of attack, and again resorted to intrigues. These, however, proved futile. Nehemiah completed the work which he undertook with so much zeal, and gained even the reluctant admiration of his enemies. The walls were rebuilt in fifty-two days.

Upon the completion of the walls, Nehemiah turned his attention to the internal affairs of Jerusalem. Some of the nobles who had been guilty of double dealing and had been in secret league with the enemy, oppressed the poor most heartlessly. The rich who loaned the poor either money for the payment of the royal ground-tax, or grain for their sustenance in seed time, oppressed them sorely; the insolvent debtors saw the fields, vineyards, and olive orchards which they had given as pledges appropriated by their creditors, and even their sons and daughters treated as slaves. When the plaintive cries of the oppressed reached the ears of Nehemiah, he determined to take the heartless creditors to task. He called a great assembly, and denounced in emphatic terms the cruelty of the creditors specifically condemned by the Law,

"We" (in Persia) "after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Judahns who were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? Or shall they be sold unto us (*i. e.* to be redeemed by the Judaeans of Persia?"; Neh. 5:8), he said sarcastically. So great was the esteem in which Nehemiah was held and so deep was the respect for the Torah even among the nobles and the rich, that they promised immediately to set the children of their debtors at liberty, to restore to them their homes and fields, and, in general, to cancel all debts. Nehemiah took advantage of this generous frame of mind of the rich nobles, and made them take a solemn oath that they would carry out their promises.

This was a significant victory won by the Law over selfishness. But it was the governor, above all, who set the example of self-denial. He declined to accept the "Pehah's bread," or the tax for the maintenance of the governor's household to which he was entitled, and even advanced money and corn to the poor; and, if they were unable to repay him, he cancelled the debt altogether. His relatives and subordinates acted in the same generous manner. On account of his liberal and unselfish conduct, Nehemiah was able to overcome all obstacles and to re-establish the commonwealth on a firm basis. The people loved him and the nobles obeyed him, willingly or unwillingly.

But Nehemiah had still another great task before him; to repopulate Jerusalem and to provide servants for the Temple. In the confusion following the attack of Sanballat, the people had fled in all directions, and, among them, the Levites who had been deprived of their livelihood. Now, that the walls had been rebuilt and the gates put in position, Nehemiah realized that the population was inadequate, and that there were no Levites to guard the

gates. He therefore issued a call to all those who had left Jerusalem, as well as to those who had settled in the villages from the beginning, to take up a permanent abode in Jerusalem. Many noble families acceded voluntarily to Nehemiah's call; but as the number of the volunteers did not suffice to provide Jerusalem with an adequate population, it was decided that a tenth of the village population, to be chosen by lot, was to settle in the capital. But Nehemiah did not regard everyone as worthy of residence in the holy city; and least of all, the offspring of intermarriages. He, therefore, consulted the register containing the list of the families that had returned from Babylonia, in order to prove the Judahn descent of each family before the privilege was granted it of residing in Jerusalem. Nehemiah was very strict in this matter. Three families consisting of six hundred and forty-two persons that could not prove that they were of Israelitish descent were denied residence; and three priestly families that could not produce their genealogical register were suspended from their dignity for the time being. To protect the temple against sudden attacks on the part of the rejected half-breeds, Nehemiah erected a citadel north of the temple in which he placed the Persian troops that Artaxerxes had sent along with him. This citadel was named Birah (Baris), and was destined to play a fateful part in the history of the future.

After Nehemiah had fortified and repopulated Jerusalem, had provided a center for the commonwealth, and had created a body politic that was capable of resistance to some extent, he decided to breathe a soul also into the body politic—the Law. For this purpose he needed the assistance of men who were well versed in the Law. Thus, Ezra, who had kept in the background throughout the zealous activity of Nehemiah, came to the fore

again. On the festival of the first day of the seventh month, the entire population, including the people who lived outside of the capital, gathered in Jerusalem in the open space in front of the water gate. A high platform was erected from which Ezra was to read the Torah to the people. The assembly rose to its feet when Ezra opened the scroll of the Law, and responded in a loud and fervent "Amen" to his introductory benediction. Amidst a silence, solemn and impressive, he proceeded to read the Law in a loud voice, and the audience listened with breathless attention. Scholarly Levites made the meaning of the scriptural passages so clear and explicit that even the women and the children could understand them; and so deep was the impression that the vast assembly broke out in loud sobbing. Most probably Ezra selected that passage from Deuteronomy which described the horrible consequences that would result from a violation of the Torah, and the people became conscience-stricken. It was with some difficulty that Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites succeeded in calming the contrite and sobbing assembly. Thereupon, sorrow gave way to a mood of exaltation, and the people rejoiced because they were able to understand the scriptural passages read to them. It was the first time that the entire people realized that the Law was a part of themselves, and that they were its standard-bearers. The change which began in the Babylonian exile was completed. The work commenced by the prophets was finished by the scholars.

So impressed were the people by the Torah to which they had hitherto paid little or no attention, that they wanted to hear more of it. The heads of the families whose forefathers had resisted the prophets so stubbornly, came to Ezra the next day and asked him to continue the reading of the Torah,

and to teach the people what the law demanded of them. Thereupon, Ezra read the passage that prescribed the festivals that were to be celebrated in the seventh month. As a result, the people were ordered, through heralds, to make the prescribed preparations for the Feast of Booths, and never was a festival celebrated with greater joy and enthusiasm. On each day of the eight days' festival, a portion of the Torah was read to the people. Henceforth, the reading of the Law formed an integral part of divine worship.

Ezra and Nehemiah took advantage of this mood of exaltation to complete their work of separating the Judaeans from their foreign wives. With this object in view they instituted a fast, and everyone appeared in mourner's garb. The portion of the Law prohibiting marriage with Ammonites and Moabites was read and explained, and the Levites made a public confession of sin in the name of the people. All men who had contracted such marriages separated themselves at once from their foreign wives; all connections with the Samaritans and the offspring of intermarriages were severed. Before the enthusiasm died out, Ezra and Nehemiah caused the people to make a solemn covenant that those offenses of which they had been guilty heretofore would not be repeated. The oath embraced these specific obligations: (a) Judaeans must not give their daughters in marriage to strangers, and must not marry strange wives. This obligation was placed first because Ezra and Nehemiah regarded it as the most important; (b) The Sabbath and festival should be celebrated, and no business transacted on these days with strangers who offered goods for sale; (c) the fields should lie fallow on the seventh year, and all debts cancelled in that year. For the maintenance of the temple, each adult was to contribute one-third of a shekel

(ab. 18 cents) annually; wood for the altar was to be supplied by lot, on stated occasions; the first fruits of the fields and of fruit trees was to be brought to the temple annually; the priests and Levites were to be given their portion as prescribed by the Law. The temple, above all, must not be neglected. The wording of these obligations was written down in a scroll, and signed and sealed by the representatives of the people. At the head of the list of subscribers stands Nehemiah, and the document bears altogether eighty-four or eighty-five signatures. Tradition has it that this covenant was signed by one hundred and twenty representatives, called "The men of the Great Assembly" (Anshe Keneseth ha-Gedolah).

Nehemiah rendered his people extraordinary services within a short space of time. He not only reorganized the shattered commonwealth, and rendered it secure from attack by fortifying the capital, but he also reintroduced the Torah to the people, and brought them into harmony with it. The people of Israel was, henceforth, to take the Law of Moses as its guide in life, and gladly and sincerely endeavor to reduce its precepts and obligations to practice. Hitherto, the nation regarded itself as the "People of the Lord," but did not understand the moral obligations which such a designation involved. The lofty ideals of the prophets were beyond their comprehension, and the prophets themselves did not state clearly and definitely what they expected the people to do. As a result of their ignorance of the requirements of the Law, the people vacillated, now clinging to the God of their fathers, now lapsing into idolatry with its vicious practices. Ezra and Nehemiah put the Torah on a firm basis by stating its demands clearly and definitely. The lapses of the people were due to ignorance of the Law; this ignorance once removed, the

people gladly and joyously accepted the ordinances of the Torah. They were grateful to their teachers, "and they rejoiced with a great joy when they understood the things which were made known to them."

Nehemiah seemed purposely to have summoned the people in large popular assemblies whenever the opportunity presented itself, in order to produce a deep and lasting impression upon the assembled multitudes. Accordingly, he called the people together a second time for the purpose of dedicating the walls of the city upon their completion. This time, also, the women and children were present. As this was to be a joyous occasion, he summoned all the Levitical singers to Jerusalem that they might gladden the hearts of the people by song and the harp. He organized two processions which, starting from the same point, were to march around the walls in opposite directions, and finally meet in the Temple. The one procession, containing half of the nobles and half of the people, including women and children, was led by Ezra, the other by Nehemiah. Each group was preceded by a Levitical choir, singing songs of praise and thanksgiving, accompanied by eight Levites who played on the harp, the viol and cymbals. Thus, one division, starting from the western wall, marched through the western, southern and eastern parts of the city, while the other division, starting from the same point, marched through the western, northern and eastern parts of the city. The sound of the Levitical songs and music reached beyond the mountains, and filled the hearts of the people with joy and exultation.

Nehemiah also took care to provide for order and regularity in the temple service. To prevent the interruption of the offering of sacrifice, it was essential that provision be made for the main-

tenance of the priests and Levites. The owners of the fields had, indeed, solemnly pledged themselves to provide the priests and Levites with their portions and tithes in accordance with the requirements of the Law. But Nehemiah was not satisfied with mere promises; and he therefore adopted a plan which was to insure system and regularity in the delivery of the gifts for the support of the priests and the Levites. At harvest time, the Levites were to go to the rural districts to collect the tithes which they were to bring to Jerusalem. To provide for a regular distribution of the tithes, of which the priests were to receive one-tenth, Nehemiah provided large magazines where the produce was to be kept. The distribution to the individuals was to be made only from those magazines, and was in charge of officials especially appointed for that purpose. Nehemiah also made special efforts to provide homes for the residents of Jerusalem. For those who had no means, he built homes at his own expense. In this way Nehemiah built almost a new city whose inhabitants were to form a model community with the Torah as their guide. Nehemiah administered the affairs of Judah as governor for twelve years (444-432), when he had to return to Persia, being still a favorite of Artaxerxes. He left Judah in the hope that the work he had accomplished, the security of Jerusalem against outside enemies and the heightened spiritual life of the people, would be of long duration.

But the creations of man are ever subject to change. No sooner did Nehemiah turn his back upon Judah, than a reaction set in, instigated, as it seems, by the high priest Eliashib who, judging from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, did not stand in the high regard of those two great leaders. In spite of the solemn decision of the great assembly, some of the nobles resumed their former

friendly relations with the Samaritans and the half-breeds. Manasseh, a member of the high-priestly family, married Nicaso, a daughter of Sanballat, and others who had secretly been dissatisfied with the policy of complete separation introduced by Ezra and Nehemiah, followed his example. Nehemiah's work was undone completely. Tobiah, Nehemiah's second enemy, was not only allowed to return to Jerusalem unhindered, but he was even provided with a residence in one of the temple halls.

This sudden change brought about a far-reaching confusion of ideas and ideals. The people were highly indignant at the high priest and his followers, and showed their open contempt for him. The owners of the fields refused to give the tithes and the priestly portions as a protest. As a result, the innocent suffered likewise; the Levites, their support withdrawn, left the temple and the city to eke out a living somewhere else. The sacrificial offerings were also diminished, and the priests who had charge of the altar offered sick, blind and maimed animals to prevent the cessation of sacrifices altogether. Many people, disgusted at the conduct of the representatives of the temple, turned their backs upon the temple and the community altogether, and looked only after their own interests, without regard to justice and to their oath of fealty to the Torah. The success of this class brought confusion in the minds of the sincerely pious who had to struggle for their existence, and they often complained: "It is vain to serve God, and what profiteth it to us to obey his commandments and to walk in humility before the Lord? Only the evil doers are happy" (Malachi 3:14-15).

Worse still were the dissensions which broke out as a result of the reaction following the departure

of Nehemiah. Families were split and divided. What was right and what was the Law? Fathers could not agree with their sons. The former adopted the more stringent, the latter the milder views, and discord reigned in the families. Those "who feared the Lord," who were animated by the spirit of Nehemiah, formed themselves into a party, assumed a definite attitude towards the burning questions that confronted them, and adopted a plan of action. They placed their hopes upon Nehemiah who had returned to his duties at the court of Artaxerxes. If he should decide to return to Jerusalem, he would at once put an end to the distressing confusion, and would again restore harmony, unity and salvation. One member of that circle, deeply stirred by the general confusion, and especially by the misdeeds of the high-priestly party, was carried away by the prophetic spirit and rose courageously to chastise the wicked and to comfort the God-fearing. This man was Malachi, the last prophet, who worthily closed the long line of men of God who succeeded each other in the course of four hundred years.

To the disconsolate and despairing, Malachi prophesied the speedy arrival of the "lord whom they were seeking, and of the messenger of the Covenant, whom they are desiring," who would restore the former order of things. "Who will be able to endure the day of his coming, and who will be able to stand when he makes his appearance? He is like the fire of a smelter, and like the lye of a washer. He will sit to clean and purify, and will clean and purify the sons of Levi like gold and silver, that they may be worthy of bringing offerings to the Lord" (Malachi 3:1-3). He admonished the people not to withhold the tithes, but to deliver them again to the magazines as heretofore. For the distant future Malachi foretold, like the earlier

prophets, the coming of a great and awful day, when the difference between the righteous and the evil doers will be made patent. Before the coming of the "day of the Lord," the last day, God will send the prophet Elijah to reconcile fathers and sons. For the guidance of the people, in their conduct, the last prophet points to the Law of Moses; "Remember the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him as statutes and laws on Mount Horeb" (3:22). These are the last prophetic words. The Torah which Ezra's zeal made accessible to the people, and which found a circle of students who fostered it, rendered the prophetic word superfluous. The scholar was, henceforth, to take the place of the man of God, and the reading of the Law in popular assemblies and in houses of prayer was to replace the prophetic announcements.

Whether or not Nehemiah, at the Persian court, knew of the anxiety with which he was awaited in Jerusalem, or of the prophecy of Malachi that pointed him out as the embodiment of the nation's hope, before the people of Judah realized it he was already in Jerusalem, having obtained for the second time the permission of Artaxerxes to return to his spiritual home (between 430-425). Immediately upon his arrival, he acted indeed, like a smelter's fire and like the washer's lye, for he purged the community of all its impure elements. First of all, he drove Tobiah the Ammonite from the temple hall which his relative Eliashib had assigned him as a residence, and removed Eliashib from the high-priesthood. He then summoned the heads of the people, and reproached them bitterly for withholding the tithes, thereby causing the Levites to forsake the temple. A proclamation issued by Nehemiah sufficed to induce the owners of fields to deliver their belated tithes to the maga-

zines, and the Levites to return to Jerusalem. He also seems to have restored the dignity of the temple worship and to have removed frivolous, insincere officials. A more difficult undertaking which brought him in conflict with the members of the high priest's family, was Nehemiah's attempt to bring about the annulment of the recently contracted intermarriages. Manasseh, a son or kinsman of the high priest Joiada, Eliashib's son and successor, refused to discard his wife, Nicosa, the daughter of Sanballat, and Nehemiah was firm enough to banish him from the country. Others, priests and non-priests, who refused to comply with Nehemiah's orders were also banished. Having restored the old order of things in the capital, Nehemiah proceeded to the country towns to investigate conditions there. Half of the offspring of intermarriages in such places where the Judaeans lived in close proximity to the Ashdodites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Samaritans, had adopted the language of their mother and were totally ignorant of the Hebrew. This estrangement of Judaean children from their own origin provoked Nehemiah's particular indignation and zeal. He quarreled with the fathers, cursed them, and chastised the stubborn. By means of such energetic measures, Nehemiah succeeded in dissolving the marriages with the neighboring peoples and in preserving the Hebrew language for the growing generation.

Nehemiah also persisted in introducing a strict observance of the Sabbath which, hitherto, was observed in an indifferent and negligent manner. The Torah did, indeed, prescribe the cessation of work on that day, but it did not specify which kind of labor was permitted and which was not. In their ignorance of the requirements of the Law, the Judaean agriculturists permitted themselves to press their grapes on the Sabbath, to load their

asses with burdens, and to bring their wares to market in Jerusalem. Seeing such activities on the Sabbath day, Nehemiah called together the country people who had come to market, explained to them that such labor as they performed constituted a desecration of the Sabbath, and asked them to desist in the future. The country people yielded readily. The residents of Jerusalem acted more stubbornly when Nehemiah tried to stop the sale of fresh fish and other goods which Tyrians used to sell in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Nehemiah had to order the closing of the gates of the city from Friday evening till Saturday evening, and the strict exclusion of the Tyrian fish mongers and peddlers, before the practice was stopped. It was as a result of such strong measures that the Sabbath was henceforth observed with great scrupulousness. Nehemiah carried out the rigorous enforcement of the law for which Erza prepared the way, and erected an almost insurmountable barrier between the people of Judah and other peoples. Those who were discontented with the rigorous enforcement of the law, had to step outside of the community of Judah and form a sect of their own. Nehemiah possibly witnessed himself the formation of the first sect; and inasmuch as he was partly responsible for such an event, and was possibly blamed by some people, he found it necessary to justify his conduct, and to emphasize the services he had rendered to the disorganized commonwealth. With that object in view he composed a kind of memorandum, in which he described, now in detail, now in few words, what he had done for the security and the promotion of the small state, and for the promotion of the law, both on his first visit and on his return. In this apology, written in his old age, he adds here and there,

"May my God remember unto me for good all the services I have rendered this people" (Neh. 5: 19; 13:14, 22, 36).

Nehemiah's name remained engraven in the hearts of his grateful people. The spiritual forces which Ezra and Nehemiah set in motion gathered momentum with the ages; and a grateful posterity ascribed to these two men the establishment of all beneficial institutions the origin of which was unknown.

CHAPTER III

THE POST-NEHEMIAN PERIOD: THE SOPHERIM (420-332 B. C. E.)

Hate springing from unrequited love is stronger and more passionate than that resulting from any other cause. As Sanballat and the Samaritans were prompted by a sincere predilection for the God who was worshipped at Jerusalem in their efforts for admission into the Judaean community, their repeated rejection by Nehemiah turned their love into a burning hate. The banishment of Manasseh, Sanballat's son-in-law, for the reason that he refused to dissolve his marriage with Sanballat's daughter, fanned the hatred of the Samaritans into fury; and the shrewd Sanballat conceived a plan that was to undermine the Judaean commonwealth through its own members. What if he were to erect another temple, dedicated to the same God, that was to rival the Jerusalem temple and minimize its importance? He had priests, descendants of Aaron, who could officiate in the new temple in accordance with the prescriptions of the Torah; and his own son-in-law, Manasseh, could occupy the dignity of the high priesthood. Such a scheme would satisfy his longings to worship the God of

Israel, as well as his ambition to stand at the head of an independent community.

The new temple was erected by Sanballat on the summit of the fertile Mount Gerizim, at the foot of the city of Shechem, in the very center of Palestine, probably after the death of Artaxerxes (420 B. C. E.). This place was selected by the learned priests who were banished from Jerusalem, because, according to the Deuteronomic Law (Deut. 14:29; 27:12), the blessing over those who would observe the law was pronounced from that mountain. Incidentally, the Samaritans attached a different significance to that word (blessing). They designated, and still designate to this day, Mount Gerizim as the "Mount of Blessing," implying that that mountain was the source of all blessing and salvation. Even the city of Shechem they renamed "Blessing" (Mabrachta). Sanballat, or the priests of the Gerizim temple, maintained further that the Samaritans were not descendants of those exiles whom an Assyrian king had transplanted to that territory, but on the contrary, that they were genuine Israelites, the remnant of the ten tribes, or of the tribes of Joseph and Ephraim. In all probability, there were among the Samaritans a few descendants of those families that managed to maintain themselves near Samaria after the fall of the kingdom of Israel. But the claim of Sanballat that all the Cuthites or Samaritans were genuine Israelites, descendants of Joseph and Ephraim, was one of those successful and audacious fabrications that, by their very enormity, startle even those who are convinced to the contrary. At any rate, their language betrayed them as a mixed people. It was such a mixture of Aramaic and other such heterogeneous elements that it is impossible to trace its origin.

Sanballat's scheme succeeded. The Samaritans

had a temple around which they could gather, and priests of the house of Aaron; boldly confronted their Mount Gerizim with Mount Moriah; proved from Deuteronomy to their own satisfaction that God Himself had selected that mountain as His sanctuary, and proudly designated themselves Israelites. Sanballat and his successors took great pains to entice many Judaeans, and those whom they won over they provided with homesteads and fields, and served them in every way. Transgressors of the law in Judah and Jerusalem sought safety among the Samaritans, and were received with open arms. Out of such elements was formed a new, separate half-Judaean community or sect, in a secluded territory called Samaria, whose centre was either at Shechem or at Samaria—the sect of Samaritans. Its members were energetic, tenacious and resourceful, as though Sanballat, its founder, had breathed his own spirit into them. In spite of their small number, it has miraculously maintained itself to this very day.*

The rise of Samaritanism was, in reality, a triumph of Judaean worship and doctrine, since these had the power to attract irresistibly such a motley, mixed people that took them as the guiding star of their life, and never departed from them in spite of their many vicissitudes. The Law of Moses which the priests who had been banished from Jerusalem brought with them, the Samaritans in olden times, and even to-day, regarded with as much sacredness as the Judaeans, and they gave expression to their religious and civic life in accordance with its prescriptions. But in spite of their common basis, the Judaean people had little

* At the present day they number about one hundred and fifty souls. Their residence is at Nablus, 28 miles north of Jerusalem, whence they make pilgrimages to Mount Gerizim on the occasion of the three festivals.—R.

cause to rejoice at the birth of the new sect. The first Judaean sect caused the Judaean people as much grief as that other sect that later sprang from its midst. Not only were the Samaritans the internecine foes of the Judaeans for a long time; they even sought to deprive them of the right of existence. They maintained that they alone were the descendants of Israel; denied the sanctity of Jerusalem and its temple, and branded the prophetic writings and Judaean traditions as fabrications. From time to time they did, indeed, cast furtive glances across the border and did not hesitate to imitate the Judaeans; but, if they had the power, they would have annihilated the people whom they were copying. The Judaeans hated the Samaritans just as keenly. They styled them "the people of fools living in Shechem (Ecclesiasticus, 3:25-6). The ancient antagonism between Jerusalem and Samaria was revived. Its character was no longer a political, but rather an inward religious one and, therefore, more violent and passionate.

The rise of the Samaritan sect, however, reacted upon the Judaeans by awakening their self-consciousness. Since they resented the opposition presented by their neighboring sect, and indignantly rejected its teachings and practices, the Judaeans had first of all to understand themselves, and to form a clear comprehension of the essence of their own ideals. What was it that distinguished them not only from the pagan world, but also from that neighboring sect that worshipped the same God, and acknowledged the authority of the same Torah? The idea that they had a religion of their own was first made clear to them, and the conception of "Judaism" first occurred to them as a result of the opposition of the Samaritans. Henceforth, the name "Judaean" was to lose its tribal significance, but was to stand for an adherent of

Judaism, whether he belonged to the tribe of Judah or Benjamin, or was a priest or a Levite.*

The most vital element of the conception of Judaism was the recognition of the Torah as the direct revelation of God through Moses. In the period after Ezra and Nehemiah, the veneration and glorification of the Book of the Law was just as great as had been the general indifference to it in former times. The Torah was regarded and honored as the embodiment of all wisdom (Ecclesiasticus, 33). Hebrew poetry that was still flourishing glorified it with enthusiastic praise. It is self-evident that the Torah became the fundamental code of the small Judaean state or commonwealth. Each act was regulated in accordance with the prescription of the Torah, "as it is written." Slavery, as far as native Judaeans were concerned, ceased altogether. Judaeans who wished to sell themselves as slaves could find no purchasers. The institution of the jubilee year, the object of which was to restore slaves to liberty, became superfluous as a result. The Sabbatical year, on the contrary, was strictly enforced. Each seventh year the debts of the poor were remitted, and the fields remained fallow. The Judaean favorites at the Persian court probably succeeded beforehand in obtaining a remission of the royal tax on the products of the soil during the Sabbatical year. The civic life of the community was also regulated by the Torah. Special consideration was given to the care of the poor in accordance with the admonition of Deuteronomy. In the reorganized community the giving of alms was regarded as a great virtue, and every city had its special charity officials. The complaints of the psalmists against the heartlessness of the rich towards the needy and the helpless

* Since the post-exilic period the word Judaean is used here instead of Judahn to designate the entire people.

needed no longer be repeated. A judicial system was established with such perfection and conscientiousness that it could well have served as a model for all the nations of the earth. Absolute equality before the law was taken as a matter of course to such an extent that there was even no need to lay stress upon it. Public sessions of courts of justice were instituted in all the larger cities every Monday and Thursday, either because these were the usual market days or for some other reason.

The fact that the life of the commowealth was regulated by the Torah evidently prompted the spiritual leaders of the people to institute a "high court" whose function it should be to interpret the written Law, as well as to prescribe new ordinances in accordance with the present and future needs. The Deuteronomic code prescribes the creation of such a high court that should be the final arbiter in doubtful cases, and that should be the highest authority from whose decision none dare depart either to the right or to the left. The men who stood at the head of the community in post-Nehemian days and who were filled with the spirit of the Torah, must, therefore, have regarded it as a duty to call into existence such an authoritative body. Following the example of Moses who had surrounded himself with seventy "elders" or advisers, the leaders decided that the new high court should be composed of seventy "elders" likewise. This singular institution that maintained its existence to the very fall of the Judaean state, that became the guardian of the Law, and played a significant part at times, was undoubtedly called into existence at this time. Out of the great assembly under Nehemiah that was called together only once for the purpose of declaring its allegiance to the Torah, there developed a permanent body to de-

liberate upon important religious and moral questions. The seventy members of the high court were probably chosen from the various prominent families. As the high priest was responsible to the Persian court for the conduct of the commonwealth, and thus had a certain political significance, he had necessarily to be put at the head of the high court whether or not he was worthy of the honor. The membership of the high court had therefore to be increased by one, and this number remained permanent. The president of the high court received the title of the "Father of the Court of Judgment." Most of the members of that body were scholars or students of the Law, designated Sopherim. The aim of that body, from its very organization, was to follow the course pursued by Ezra and Nehemiah, and to make Judaism, or the Law, a matter of the very life and habit of the people. The high court brought about a complete revolution. All the changes that manifested themselves two centuries later in the Judaean community were their work; the new regulations which tradition ascribed to Ezra, or which are known under the name of "Statements of the Sopherim" (דברי סופרים) were entirely the creations of the body. They laid the foundation of a structure that was to withstand the siege of the ages. Above all, the regular reading of the Pentateuch was instituted at that time. A portion of the Pentateuch was to be recited before the assembled congregation on every Sabbath and holiday. In addition, a portion of the Pentateuch, if only a few verses, was to be read publicly on two week days, when the villagers were in the habit of gathering in the neighboring town, either to attend market or the court of justice. At first, the reading was done only by experts but as, little by little, it began to be considered a distinction to be counted among

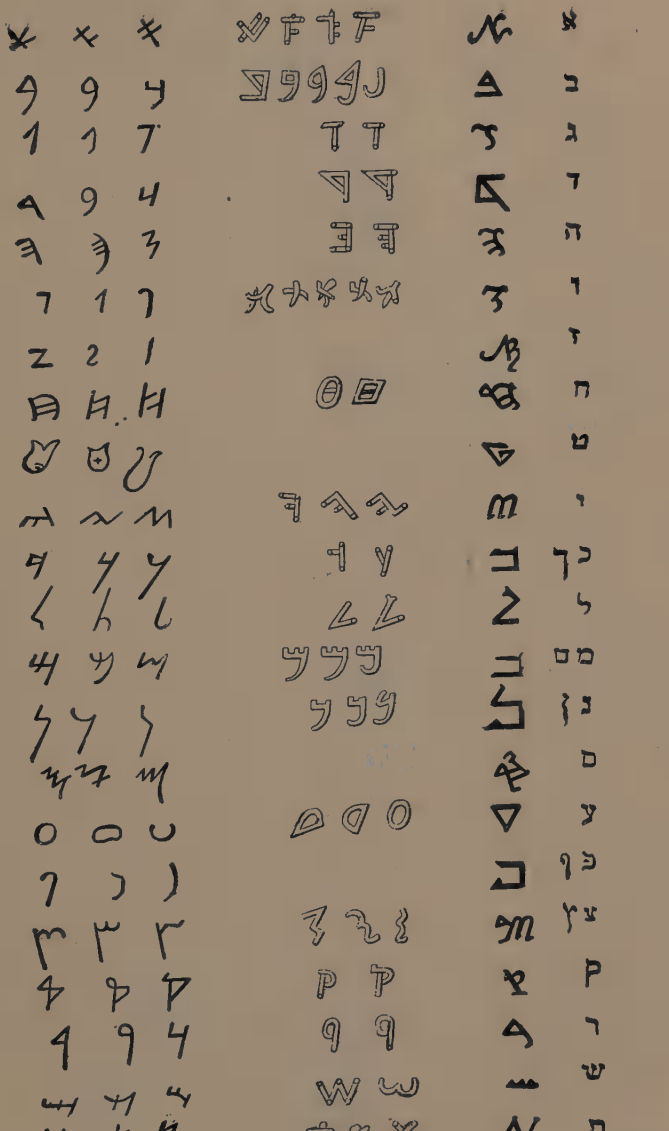
the readers, everyone was eager to share in the honor of public reading.

To satisfy this ambition, it was essential to make the Torah more easily legible. Up to that time, the text of the Torah was written in archaic letters, in Phoenician or old Hebrew characters which only experts were able to decipher. To the Judaeans of the Persian empire, the Torah in its ancient script was even more of a sealed book than it was to those of Palestine. It was, therefore, a necessity to exchange the archaic characters, "the Hebrew script," for another that was then in use in the countries of the Euphrates and the Tigris. This new or moulded script, which the Judaeans of Palestine and especially of the Persian empire utilized in daily practice, was substituted in the text of the Torah and of such other sacred writings as were then in existence, for the ancient characters, and was called the "Assyrian," in contradistinction to the old Hebrew, because it originated and developed in one of the former Assyrian provinces. The Samaritans, on the other hand, out of the spirit of opposition, retained the old Hebrew characters of the text of the Pentateuch, that they might reproach their opponents for introducing an innovation that was not permitted, and accuse them of falsifying the Torah. Even present day Samaritans still retain the old Hebrew script in their sacred writings, though it is a sealed book even to most of their priests.

The regular readings from the Torah and the legibility of its text produced a spiritual ferment and activity which gradually transformed the entire people. The Torah became their spiritual property, the sanctuary of their hearts and minds. As a result of this spirit, another institution sprang into being at that time: the institution of schools, where young men might obtain a knowledge of the

Law and imbibe the love for it and a desire to practice it. Such a higher school was certainly established at Jerusalem. The teachers were called Sopherim or "Wise Men," and the pupils were styled the "Pupils of the Wise." The activity of the Sopherim was of a twofold nature: to interpret the laws of the Torah, and to make them applicable to the life of the individual and of the community. These supplementary interpretations were called "Explanations" (Midrash) and were arrived at not arbitrarily but by following certain definite hermeneutic principles. The high court and the schools worked hand in hand and complemented one another.

This spiritual activity resulted in a far-reaching intellectual stimulus that produced upon posterity a peculiarity amounting almost to an inborn trait, the impulse to investigate, to search, to sharpen one's wit in order to give a new turn to every word or subject. However, the highest ecclesiastical tribunal, later called Sanhedrin, which gave rise to all these institutions and impulses in the course of time, did not confine itself to the interpretation of the written Law, but formulated independent laws that were calculated to regulate, to strengthen, and to stimulate the moral and religious life of the people. The principle: "Make a fence around the Law," dating from a former age, already indicated the tendency of prohibiting certain permitted cases when they border upon the prohibited and might be confounded with the latter. And the consideration given to the prevention in advance of any possible violation of the law, this "fencing around," had its justification in that period of transition, since its object was to accustom the people in general, who were as yet unfamiliar with the requirements of the Torah, to the observance of the laws and to the fulfillment of their duties. As a result of this car-



Ancient Hebrew Alphabet

dinal principle, the prevention of any possible violations of the Mosaic Law, the period of the Sopherim evolved a new series of laws that became binding for all time. The degrees of consanguinity, with reference to the prohibition of marriage, were widely extended in an ascending, descending and collateral series. Special precautions were taken to prevent any possible violation of chastity. A man was not to meet another man's wife alone in a secluded room. The indifference with which the Sabbath was observed in the days of Nehemiah, gave way to an extraordinarily rigorous observance of the day of rest. To forestall any possible desecration of the Sabbath and of the festivals, it was decreed that work must cease even before the sunset of the preceding day. An official was appointed for that purpose who was to blow a horn as a signal that all labor must cease.

The Sopherim endeavored to make the Sabbath and the festivals days of solemnity and of joy, days in which man was to cast aside the worries and anxieties of a work-a-day world. With that object in view, they introduced the custom of the drinking of a cup of wine at the beginning and at the close of those days of rest; at the beginning, to bring home to one's mind by means of a benediction that that day was holy and sanctified by God himself (Kiddush), and at the conclusion, to emphasize the lofty significance of the day in contrast with the work days about to begin (Habdalah). By means of these ordinances, that did not remain dead letters, the Sabbath received a sacred character and became a day of spiritual joy, so that all the rigorous requirements of its observance were forgotten in the very joy of their observance. The first evening of the spring festival, when it was the custom to eat the paschal lamb, likewise received a lofty significance in the days of the Sopherim, in

order to preserve from year to year the recollections of the redemption from Egypt, and to keep alive the ideals of freedom. By custom or by ordinances, several cups of wine were drunk on that occasion, and even the most needy supplied themselves with the necessary wine, or received it out of the charity fund. Several families united in celebrating the festival together, sat comfortably around the board, not for the purpose of indulging in a luxurious meal but rather to recall vividly the miraculous redemption from Egypt; partook of the bitter herbs, ate the unleavened bread, tasted a little of the paschal lamb, and passed the wine around not to get intoxicated but to add good cheer to the festival. Psalms were sung on that occasion. In time, it came to be a happy family festival.

In connection with the sacrifices at the Temple, public prayer also was introduced at that time, and was offered three times a day, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. The Judaeans had, indeed, been accustomed to prayer from the time of the Babylonian exile, but while exilic prayer consisted mostly of confessions of sin, and of expressions of repentance at Israel's idolatry, it assumed a new character in the period of the Sopherim. The form of the prayers was not yet fixed, but their general tenor was already clearly indicated. The morning service was held in one of the temple halls, and began with one or more selected psalms of praise and thanksgiving. At the conclusion of the psalms, the congregation joined in the response: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone performeth wonderful things, and blessed be the name of His glory forever, and may His glory fill the whole universe, Amen, Amen." This was followed by a prayer of thanksgiving for the light of the sun which God bestows upon all mankind, and for the light of the

Torah which He bestowed upon Israel. Thereupon, several selections from the Torah were read; the Decalog, the Shema which emphasizes the unity of and the love for God, another kindred selection, and a chapter containing the admonition not to follow after the desire of the eyes and the heart. At the conclusion of the Shema, the congregation again joined in the response: "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever." The chief prayer consisted of six brief sections, and its context was: Thanksgiving to God because He had chosen Israel's forefathers to His service; acknowledgment of divine omnipotence as manifested in nature by means of fructifying rains, and in man by means of the future resurrection of the dead; acknowledgment of God's holiness; a prayer for the acceptance of Israel's petitions and sacrifices; thanksgiving for the preservation of life and for its sustenance; and finally, a prayer for peace, in conjunction with the priestly benediction. The congregations assembled for the afternoon and evening prayers also; those services, however, were brief, since the psalms and the scriptural selections were omitted. The order of prayer of the temple was copied in all the houses of prayer, or the "Houses of the Community" (Beth ha-Keneseth), outside of Jerusalem.

The morning worship on the Sabbath and holidays did not differ essentially from the week day worship, except that a particular prayer was introduced in order to emphasize the holiness of these days. The only distinction given to holidays that indicated their superior significance consisted in the reading of longer selections from the Torah at the conclusion of the service. In the course of time, selections from the prophetic books were added, consisting of such passages that had some

reference to the particular festival. The prominence given to the prophetic books grew out of the antagonism between the Judaeans and the Samaritans. The latter denied the sanctity of the temple and of Jerusalem, and ignored the prophetic writings completely, because they abounded in references to the "City of God," and to the sacredness of the Sanctuary which God had chosen. To the representatives of Judaism it seemed, therefore, a matter of urgency to cite the prophets as testimony in behalf of the sacredness of Jerusalem and its temple, and to impress this testimony upon the consciousness of their followers every Sabbath and festival. As a result of this arrangement, the prophetic words that but rarely received respect and consideration during the lifetime of the prophets, rang out in every Judaean house of worship; and though most people understood them but vaguely, the prophetic writings gradually inspired the heart and mind with lofty sentiments and ideas. As the prophetic selections used to conclude the morning service, they were called the conclusion (Haphtarah). Again, this arrangement made it necessary to form a collection of the prophetic writings and to canonize them, or rather to determine which books belonged to the canon and which were to be excluded from it. The final choice was most probably determined by the high tribunal of the Sopheric period, and the following books were admitted in the collection, under the general name of "Prophets"; the Earlier Prophets, consisting of the four historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, and the Latter Prophets, consisting of the three large books, bearing the names of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets (Hosea, Amos, Joel, Obadaiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi). This

collection was also regarded as "Sacred Writings," next in sacredness to the Torah itself.

Divine worship thus took a definite form in the period of the Sopherim. It was simple and inspiring, contained nothing that was superfluous, disturbing or tiring, and breathed throughout the full spirit of the prophets and the psalmists of old. It contained only one foreign element: the belief in the resurrection of the dead in God's great and last day, in a future period of divine favor. Otherwise, everything contained therein sprang from the pure source of the ancient law. As the towns and villages were situated in close proximity to the capital, and their inhabitants had opportunities of coming to Jerusalem frequently outside of festive occasions and of witnessing the temple worship, the latter voluntarily introduced similar services in their local houses of worship. In this way, there arose houses of worship, synagogs, at least in the larger towns, that introduced the order of service that forms to this very day the basis of divine worship. The sacrificial cult was, indeed, regarded as the most essential element of religion, since it was so ordained by the Torah, and since the holy temple existed for that purpose; and its regulations were carried out in strict accordance with the prescriptions of the Law. But notwithstanding their inherent inconsistency, the two forms of divine worship constituted a unity, supplementing each other, each borrowing from the other. Both forms of worship were held simultaneously; while the priests were offering sacrifices, the congregations were assembling for public prayer. On Sabbaths and holidays, when a special sacrifice was offered in the temple, in honor of the day, the congregation, likewise, assembled for public prayer four times. And the sacrificial cult could not entirely escape the living word, and

it, too, had to assume somewhat of a spiritual character, and had to admit the singing of psalms into its service, so powerful was the influence of this sublime poetry.

The one striking feature in connection with the temple and the sacrificial cult that tended to counteract the lofty spirit of idealism characteristic of the poetry of the prophets and the psalmists, was the multiplicity of laws with reference to ritual purity and impurity. The Torah did, indeed, lay down explicit laws on that subject. An unclean person was not to offer a sacrifice, was not to enter the temple, and in general was not to touch anything holy. There were also several degrees of impurity. The Law also prescribed the means by which the unclean or defiled person might be rendered pure. Special prescriptions were laid down for the defilement caused by dead bodies which was of frequent occurrence. The final purifying process was accomplished by bathing in spring water. But these Levitical laws of purity, originally applicable for the most part only to priests and Levites, were extended and generalized and were made to be of far-reaching and preponderant importance in all the affairs of life. This extension of the laws of ritual purity, however, was due largely to the influence of the Persians, with whom the Judaeans were in contact for centuries, and whose laws of ritual purity, as prescribed by the Avesta and the Magi were even more exacting and minute. In the environment of the Magi, the Judaeans borrowed some things from the Persians, and succumbed the more easily to their influence since many Zoroastrian doctrines and laws bore a striking resemblance, though differing in form, to many of their own laws and practices.

The fundamental conviction of the unity, spirituality and perfection of God was too deeply im-

pressed upon the minds of the Judaeans to be influenced by the Persian conception of Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd), the God of Light. The keen vision of the Judaean seers recognized at once the error of the doctrine of the dual nature of the universe, the conflict between the God of Light and Goodness (Ormuzd) and the God of Darkness and of Evil, Angra-mainyu (Ahriman). The Babylonian Isaiah opposed this Persian conception of God by teaching that the God of Israel is the creator of light *and* of darkness, of good *and* of evil: "I, the Lord, am the creator of it all" (Is. 45:7); that the universe and man are not torn asunder by two mutually hostile powers, but are controlled by unity and peace. The recognition of this conception was embodied by the Sopherim in the formula of the morning prayer: "He formeth light and createth darkness; He maketh peace, and createth it all." However, though their fundamental conception of the unity of God resisted all Persian influences, the Judaeans unconsciously absorbed some other Persian beliefs and practices. They believed it would be to the enhancement of the glory of God if He were surrounded, after the Iranian fashion, by myriads of beings ready to carry out His will and desires. The nameless "Messengers of God," spoken of in biblical literature, designating the emissaries who carried out His instructions, and referring occasionally even to human beings, like prophets, were given a distinct character and individuality after the model of the Persian Amesha Spentas and Yazatas, and were conceived of as angels with Hebrew names and with special missions. Thus, there evolved Raphael, the angel of healing; Gabriel, the angel of victory; Michael, the guardian angel of Israel; Uriel, or Suriel, the angel of light; and Matatron,

possibly a translation and a copy of the Persian god Mithra.

As the Judaeans borrowed their angelology from their Babylonian-Persian environment, so they borrowed their more reprehensible demonology. The Persians gave Ahriman, the god of darkness, a retinue of devs or devils, who lay in wait for man. Satan, appearing for the first time in the Book of Job essentially as an impartial investigator of the character and conduct of men, gave way to a mischievous, malicious and destructive being, the counterpart of Ahriman. Satan, of course, was not a god, with an independent will, like Ahriman—the well grounded Judaean conception of the unity of God precluded such a thought—but he became the chief demon, and popular imagination gradually gave him a host of evil spirits, among them Ashmodai, Samael, an angel of death lying in wait to deprive man of life. Such Persian superstitions adopted by the Judaeans, gave rise, in the course of time, to many senseless practices and formulas of a magic nature that were altogether foreign to the spirit of Judaism. The superstitious belief that evil spirits exerted malign powers over man, under certain impure circumstances, such as after sleep, and especially in the neighborhood of corpses and in places where dead bodies are kept, and that such evil powers could be warded off by ablutions and ceremonies, gave rise to curious legal provisions that rendered life gloomy, and inspired a fear of ghosts and of other creatures of the imagination.

A new concept of reward and punishment also developed in Judaism as a result of the influence of the Persian Magi. The Magi conceived the universe as divided into two great kingdoms, the kingdom of light, or Paradise, reserved for the pure, the followers of Ormuzd, and the kingdom of dark-

ness, or Hell, for the impure, the followers of Ahriman. After death, the soul of man was believed to linger near the body for three days, when it was taken to Paradise by Yezdi (angels), or dragged down to Hell by devs, according to its deserts upon earth. This notion of reward and punishment after death found its way into Judaism also. The Garden of Eden, wherein the story of creation placed Adam and Eve during their period of innocence, was changed into the Paradise destined for the God-fearing and righteous; and the valley of Hinnom (Ge-Hinnom) near Jerusalem, where children were sacrificed in the days of Ahaz, gave its name to the newly created Hell intended for evil doers and sinners. The belief in the future resurrection of the dead, likewise a Persian doctrine, became so deeply imbedded in the Judaean consciousness that it was accepted as a fundamental article of faith, though the author of the Book of Job doubted it. This hope-inspiring belief was accepted by the Judaeans so much the more readily, since their own sacred literature contained allusions corresponding to such a hope, especially in the prophetic reference to "the last day of the Lord." In the daily prayers, a benediction to God for the resurrection of the dead was inserted; and a contemporary seer, seeking to comfort Israel in its death struggle with the enemy, declared: "Many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake; some to eternal life and some to everlasting reproach and contempt" (Daniel 12:2). Out of this there developed a unique doctrine of retribution, with a richly colored life of the future, or "the future world." The imagination reveled in a fantastic world wherein all the discords of life would be harmonized, and all delusions would vanish; wherein the God-fearing, the good, and the just would rise from their

graves to bask in eternal purity and glory. Even the sinners, at least those whose sins were the result of mere carelessness and weakness, will be admitted to the enjoyment of the bliss of eternal life, after they have been purified in Hell through repentance. The question of how this resurrection is to take place or of how this beautiful and pure world was to take shape, was outside the province of the imagination. Firm faith and ardent hope do not concern themselves with subtleties; suffice it that they brought peace to the weary heart by the consciousness that, at some time, a just recompense will be meted out to man, and the sorrows wrought by the vicissitudes of life will be assuaged. Though borrowed from a foreign source, the genius of Judaism purified this doctrine, and made it a civilizing force.

In this long period of nearly two hundred years (from the death of Nehemiah to the fall of the Persian empire), a period in which the Judaean commonwealth became firmly established through law, and the structure of Judaism was reared by the extension of its own and by the absorption of foreign elements, no mention is made of even a single great personality who contributed to the rearing of the great edifice that was to withstand the storms of thousands of years. Nor is any historic fact recorded that is worthy of mention. There are no memorable events to record. All the activities of the Judaean commonwealth were concentrated upon the development of the inner life; and the details of this development, its beginning, its course, and its influence, did not seem significant enough to the contemporary generation to transmit them to posterity. The men who were part and parcel of this movement saw nothing striking in it to be worthy of chronicling. The Judaean people occupied itself solely with peaceful pursuits,

and forgot the art of war, possibly even to the extent of self-defense against the hostile attacks of its neighbors. Ezekiel's prophecy that the Judaean commonwealth after the return from exile would be a "land devoid of the sword, a gathering of many peoples in the mountains of Israel" (Ezekiel 38:8), was fulfilled; and a peaceful, quiet community escapes the attention of the historian.

It is certain that the Judaeans did not participate in the military movements that occurred on its borders. In the reigns of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-362 B. C. E.), and of Artaxerxes III Ochus (361-338), the self-styled Egyptian kings made repeated attempts to throw off the Persian yoke, and to regain the independence of their country. Persian armies on their way to Egypt, Egyptian armies on their way to Phoenicia, and Greek mercenaries hired by the one or the other side, frequently crossed the Judaean coast on the Mediterranean, and the passing armies could be observed from the Judaean mountains. But though they were not compelled to render military service, the Judaeans had to contribute in other ways to the expenses of the wars. Their relations to the Persian court also underwent a change for the worse at that time. The Persian kings, succumbing to foreign influences, began to indulge in idolatry, in violation of the teachings of the Avesta. Inclined to sensual pleasures as a result of the enormous wealth they acquired in the course of their conquests, the Persians were strongly attracted by the worship of the goddess of lust which they met in the course of all their expeditions under the name of Beltis, Mylitta or Aphrodite, and adopted it in their religion under the Persian name of Anaitis. Artaxerxes III gave the new goddess royal recognition, established her worship, and ordered the placing of her image in

Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, the three capitals of Persia, and in Damascus, Sardis and in all the cities of Persia and Bactria. This two-fold violation of the Iranian religion, the introduction of a new god, and the worship of images, also loosened the spiritual bond that united the Persians with the Judaeans in their common aversion to image worship. It seems that Artaxerxes forced the cult of the new goddess upon the peoples of his empire, including the Judaeans; and it is stated that the Judaeans suffered humiliations and mistreatments at the hands of the last Persian satraps on account of their religious convictions, and that many of them yielded their life rather than forsake the faith of their fathers. A curious report has it that, in the course of his wars with Egypt (361-360), Artaxerxes Ochus forced many Judaeans to leave their country and transplanted them to Hyrcania on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

In Jerusalem the Judaeans were then exposed to ignominy at the hands of one of those upstarts who rose to power with the increasing corruption and weakness of Persia. The eunuch Bagoas (Bagoses) attained to such power under Artaxerxes III, that he removed that king and his entire family out of the way, and could dictate the succession to the throne at will. Before reaching this height, he was the commander of the troops stationed in Syria and Phoenicia, and took advantage of his office to accumulate as much treasure as possible. Upon the death of the high priest Joiada, whose kinsman had been banished from Jerusalem by Nehemiah and who had been instrumental in the establishment of the rival temple on Mount Gerizim, his younger son Joshua bribed Bagoas to appoint him to the high-priesthood instead of his elder brother Johanan who was legally entitled to the office. Johanan was so indignant at

this usurpation that he killed his younger brother, the protegé of Bagoas, in the temple. When Bagoas heard of the occurrence, he hastened to Jerusalem, not to avenge the death of his protegé, but to extort money under an assumed indignation. The people were forced to pay fifty darics (about $275.00) for permission to offer the daily sacrifice, and this money had to be delivered to him every morning before the sacrifice was offered. This state of affairs continued for seven years.

It is thus seen that the Judaeans of that period had to struggle for their existence. In general, these two centuries offered but few happy moments to the Judaeans: immediately after the return, which was a period of enthusiasm; under Darius I, who treated them with special favor; and, finally, during Nehemiah's presence and zealous activities in Jerusalem. Otherwise their lot was one of depression, wretchedness and helplessness. They leave upon one the impression of looking up to the heights with moist eyes, asking sorrowfully, "Whence cometh my help?" Traces of this wretchedness and weakness are found also in the literature of these two centuries that has been preserved. During the exile, the poignant grief and ardent longing that stirred the souls of the people found expression in rich and beautiful blossoms of prophecy and poetry. With the cessation of the excitement, and with the realization of the people's hopes, the spiritual and poetic stimulus failed. The psalms of this period lack the vigor and the grace of their older models. The charming idyl of the Book of Ruth forms an exception in the barren literature of this time. The art of historic composition was completely neglected. Ezra and Nehemiah jotted down mere memoranda of their experiences concisely and without regard to literary form. At the very close of this period

a Levite composed a history, from the creation to his own time, called the "Chronicles," containing valuable recollections of older days, but very scanty accounts of the recent past and of his own times. The "Chronicles" include the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in a partly modified form.

Shortly after the conclusion of the book of "Chronicles," an entirely new epoch set in that was to put the Judaeans and Judaism to the test of proving their own worth. This new epoch was brought about by the Greeks. The Hellenistic people and the Hellenistic spirit gave rise to a far-reaching transformation in the thought, habits and manners of mankind; and those of the then existing nations that were susceptible to civilizing influences were raised by them several degrees higher on the scale of civilization. But the dissemination of this civilization, as a result of political power and extensive dominion, proceeded not from the pure Ionian source, but from that conglomeration of Greeks and barbarians known as the Macedonians.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JUDAEANS UNDER THE MACEDONIAN DOMINION (332-175 B. C. E.)

Alexander the Great of Macedonia, whom a Judaean seer (Dan. 7:6) compared to a leopard with eagle's wings because of his speedy conquests, gave the death blow to the decaying Persian empire. Asia Minor, Syria, and Phoenicia soon lay at the conqueror's feet, and kings and princes paid him their homage. Tyre and Gaza, that offered resistance, were taken by storm, the former after a siege of seven months, the latter after a siege of two months (August and November, 332), and their inhabitants were made an example of by the Macedonians. The proud land of the Pharaohs meekly surrendered to the mighty soldier soon after. What treatment did the insignificant Judaeans receive at the hands of the master of the world? The historic recollections of that period have been preserved only in legendary form, and are, therefore, not trustworthy. It is hardly conceivable that the Judaeans, as one legend has it, refused to submit to Alexander because they regarded it as a sin to violate their oath of allegiance to the Persian rulers. The Judaeans had never taken such an oath; nor could they have had any conscientious scruples in its violation, if such an

oath was made, since the last Persian kings treated them with but little consideration. The report that Alexander entered Jerusalem, and, because of an apparition, treated the Judaeans with especial consideration, is certainly a legend. This story has it that the high priest, garbed in his white vestments, at the head of a long procession of priests and Levites all in white, went to meet the young conqueror, and that his appearance made so overwhelming an impression upon Alexander, that the king greeted him kindly, forgot his anger at the refusal of the Judaeans to submit to him, and showered favors upon them, because, as he told his retinue, the image of the high priest in the same vestments had appeared before him in a dream in Macedonia and had promised him victory over the Persians. One legend names the high priest Jaddua, and an other his grandson Simon the Just, as the man who made such a tremendous impression upon the Macedonian conqueror. At any rate, it is certain that the first meeting of the representatives of Hellenism and Judaism, of the two peoples that were to bestow their respective civilizations upon the world, was a friendly one. Outwardly, the one people appeared in all its pomp and power, the other in its weakness and in an attitude of supplication. Judaea thus became a part of the province lying between the Taurus and Lebanon mountains in the north and Egypt in the south that was named Coele-Syria (hollow Syria), to distinguish it from Upper Syria. The governor of this extensive domain that formerly contained so many independent states had his seat in Samaria, which must have been a fortified and populous city. Samaria owed its distinction to its central location and to its fertile region. The first governor appointed by Alexander over Coele-Syria was Andromachus. Why the Samaritans were dissatisfied

with the distinction conferred upon them by Alexander is unknown. Were they angry because he inclined favorably towards the Judaeans? At any rate, regardless of consequences, they rose against Andromachus, seized him, and had him burned to death (in the spring of 331). Alexander's anger, upon hearing the news, was as violent as it was just. How dare that insignificant little people defy him? Upon his return from Egypt, he proceeded to Samaria, put the perpetrators of this crime to death amidst cruel torture, appointed a new governor by name of Memnon, and peopled Samaria with Macedonians. Alexander seems to have humiliated the Samaritans in other ways also. Knowing that the Samaritans harbored a bitter enmity against the Judaeans, he showed favors to the latter to indicate his displeasure at the former. A stretch of territory lying between Judaea and Samaria, that was claimed by each people and was a frequent cause of friction between them, he gave to the Judaeans, and freed it, as well as all Judaea, from all taxes during the Sabbatical year. This incensed the Samaritans still more, and added more fuel to the fire of hatred burning within them.

However, as long as Alexander's power was supreme the Samaritans had to restrain themselves, since the conqueror brooked no insubordination on the part of any of his subject states, great or small. His surprising conquests, extending as far as the Indus and the Caucasus, held the nations of the earth spellbound, and paralyzed any independent activity on their part. Where Alexander was not warring, profound peace reigned from Greece to India, and from Ethiopia to the shores of the Caspian. Alexander was the first ruler to regard the toleration of national and religious peculiarities of the nations he conquered as a wise act of

statesmanship. In Egypt he worshipped Apis and Ammon, and in Babylonia the Chaldean divinities. However, in the midst of his plans for a united world empire, the youthful hero died (323 B. C. E.) without leaving a successor worthy of his mantle. The death of Alexander spread chaos and confusion through all the nations of the earth, as though nature itself had ceased to perform its functions. Bloody wars, titanic struggles followed. Alexander had a number of veteran generals who might have been able to hold the great Macedonian empire together, had they acted harmoniously. But, though they were not genuine Greeks, and treated the Greeks rather with contempt, they had imbibed enough of the Greek spirit of insubordination and intractableness, the passion to use power as a means for self-indulgence and debauchery, to render them unable to sacrifice personal interests for the public good. As a result, the Macedonian empire was split up and divided among the contending generals. Ptolemy I, Soter, (surnamed Lagus), reigned in Egypt and, after a successful battle, Coele-Syria and Judaea also fell into his hands. When the inhabitants of Jerusalem refused to open the gates of the city to him, Ptolemy attacked them on a Sabbath when the Judaeans would not carry arms, regarding such an act as a violation of the Sabbath rest, and took many captives whom he carried to Egypt. He also took many Samaritans captive at that time.

Judaeans and Samaritans could have lived as happily as was possible in that chaotic, iron age, had they been allowed to remain the subjects of Ptolemy for a long time. Ptolemy was the mildest of Alexander's military successors, was considerate of human worth, and wrought no more harm than was necessary for the accomplishment of his purposes. But, owing to the jealousies of

his former confederates, his claim to the possession of Coele-Syria was not yet recognized by the vice-regents who still kept up the appearance of an undivided, joint government. Foremost among these was Antigonus, a man of a fiery nature, a resourceful, heroic warrior, who was determined to undermine his former friend, and who schemed to reunite the Macedonian empire and to grasp the supreme power in his own strong hands. After several years of friction, it finally came to a decisive battle between Demetrius, Antigonus's son, and Ptolemy, at Gaza (spring of 312). Ptolemy won.*

But not long after his defeat at Gaza, Demetrius, uniting his forces with those of his father, compelled Ptolemy to withdraw to Egypt. Before his retreat, however, Ptolemy dismantled the fortresses of Acco, Joppa, Gaza, Samaria and Jerusalem to prevent them from falling into the hands of his enemies. Judaea and the states composing Coele-Syria continued in this unsettled state a few years longer, until Antigonus lost his life in the battle of Ipsus, in Asia Minor (in the summer of 301), fighting against the combined forces of Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander and Seleucus. These four generals divided the Macedonian empire among them. Ptolemy received Egypt and the neighboring countries, and Seleucus almost all of Asia and Persia to the Indus.** Judaea thus became a part of the Ptolemaic kingdom, and its fate was for a long time closely connected with the fortunes of that kingdom. The Judaeans of the

* The battle of Gaza is memorable, because Seleucus, the general who was instrumental in winning the victory for Ptolemy, began to date the beginning of his power from that event, and introduced a new era, called the Seleucidan or Greek era, which the Judaeans also adopted and used for a long time.

**Cassander received Macedonia, and Lysimachus Thrace and northern Asia Minor; but neither of these kings played any part in the Jewish history of that period.—Rab.

Babylonian and Persian cities formed a part of the Seleucidan kingdom.

This change had little effect upon the political condition of the Judaeans. The tribute they formerly paid to Persia they now paid to Egypt. Their internal freedom and independence remained undisturbed. In general their condition was rather improved. The high priest, who was responsible to the king for the taxes, became both the political and spiritual head of the state. Ptolemy who, as has been indicated above, was a man of character, and a promoter of the useful, had neither cause nor pretext to oppress the Judaeans. The city of Alexandria, which was founded by Alexander the Great, and which became the capital of the first Egyptian-Macedonian king, needed an increase in population, and it was rather agreeable to Ptolemy to have Judaeans from neighboring countries settle in Alexandria. Already during the disturbances caused by the wars of Antigonus, a large number of Judaeans settled in Alexandria, and were given by Ptolemy equal rights with the Macedonians. Thus arose the Egyptian-Judaean community that was to play such an important part in Judaean history. Ptolemy, who was convinced of the loyalty of the Judaeans, planted Judaean colonies in other fortified cities of Egypt, as well as in Cyrene. Seleucus, the founder of the Seleucidan kingdom, had many Judaeans from Persia and Babylonia settle, either voluntarily or forcibly, in his newly built capital, Antioch, in upper Syria, and in many other newly built cities to swell their population. Like Ptolemy, he granted his Judaean subjects the full rights of Macedonian citizenship.

And just as Judaean colonies were formed in Macedonian-Greek countries, Greek colonies were formed on Judaean soil. Along the coast of the

Mediterranean new harbor cities were established, or the older ones were enlarged and beautified and received Greek names. Alexander's great scheme to amalgamate the Occident with the Orient was carried out by his successors to some extent. Judaea was, therefore, surrounded on all sides by a Greek speaking population. The prevailing language in the Palestinian colonies was, of course, Greek; and the customs and vices were also Greek. Judaea itself remained for a time exempt from Greek influences. The country was not rich enough and its inhabitants were not particularly attractive to the Greeks. Levity on the one side, and seriousness on the other, could not attract each other. Gradually, however, Greek words found entrance in the language of daily intercourse among the Judaeans, and the charm of Greek life, with its laughter and joyousness, made itself felt in Judaea also.

For over a hundred years and more, since the death of Nehemiah, the Judaean people, from within, resembled a larva that out of its sap spins a covering for itself; and, from without, it presented the picture of a patient sufferer who bears humiliation without opening his mouth. Since the return, Judaea did not produce a single personality that was capable of rendering conspicuous the distinctive character and thought of the Judaean people. The impetus towards the unfoldment and development of its nature came constantly from without, from the prominent men of Babylonia or Persia. The recent political changes, however, separated the Judaeans from their brethren of those countries. The Judaeans of the Euphrates and the Tigris could no longer come in frequent touch with their Palestinian brethren because the reigning dynasties, the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, were suspicious of each other. Frequent visits of

the Judaeans of the Seleucidan kingdom to Jerusalem would have been regarded with disfavor both in Antioch and in Alexandria. Had the people of Judaea been unable to grow and develop without outside assistance it would have perished, or, what amounts to the same thing in connection with the life of a people, it would have degenerated. A people that cannot maintain itself or grow without obtaining an impetus from without sinks into degeneracy and insignificance. But the Judaean people was not to degenerate; the right man appeared at the right time, who, by his sagacity and energy, saved the Judaean community from the danger that threatened it. This man was Simon the Just, son of Onias I (flourished about 300-270 B. C. E.).

The name of Simon the Just stands out conspicuous in that period that is so poor in historic material. Legend marked him for its own, and ascribed wonderful things to him; and when legend sings the praise of a historical personage it is a proof that he left a deep impression upon his generation. But even the few facts that have been preserved prove him to have been a man of significance. He was the only high priest of the house of Jeshua or Jozadak, of whom anything laudable is told, who reflected honor upon the priesthood. "He took care of his people and prevented it from stumbling" (Ben Sirach 50:4). He rebuilt and refortified the walls of Jerusalem which Ptolemy I had destroyed, probably with the consent of the king. He made many improvements in the temple which had been erected by the exiles under Cyrus, and which had suffered a great deal of damage during the two hundred years of its existence. But he also made other provisions for the future. As the wells in the neighborhood of Jerusalem used to run dry in seasons of drought, and as in addition the

temple cult demanded a large supply of water owing to the rigorous observance of the law of Levitical purity that required frequent ablutions, Simon built a deep reservoir underneath the temple, which was constantly supplied with fresh water from the well of Etam, several miles distant from Jerusalem, by means of a subterranean canal. This contrivance furnished an ample supply of water to the temple as well as to Jerusalem, and protected the people against a water famine even during a long siege.

A later poet, Jesus, son of Sirach, glorified the personality of Simon, in his capacity of high priest, in the most glowing terms. (Ecclesiasticus, ch. 50). But Simon was not alone the high priest, and not alone the head of the commonwealth and of the high court, but also the head of the schools, and he impressed this maxim upon his disciples: "The world (the Jewish community) depends upon three things: upon the study of the Torah, upon worship in the temple, and upon kindliness." This worthy high priest may have been partly responsible for the maxim of one of his most conspicuous disciples, Antigonus of Socho, who used to tell his disciples: "Be not like servants who serve their master merely for the reward they expect; but be like servants who serve their masters without any expectation of reward."

After the death of Simon, troublous times set in for the Judaean people for which Simon's descendants were partly responsible. Simon left one son and one daughter. His daughter married Tobias, a member of a priestly family. His son and successor was named Onias, after his grandfather; and nothing more can be said of him than that he was unlike his father. But through no fault of his own the time of this high priest was a critical period in the history of the Judaean peo-

ple. The wars between the Seleucidae and the Ptolemys that continued for decades, the former trying to gain, the latter trying to retain Coele-Syria, involved Judaea also in many tribulations.

Coele-Syria, including Judaea, was in possession of Egypt; but the Seleucidan king, Seleucus II, Callinicus, resorted to all sorts of intrigue to induce those countries to fall away from Egypt. The high priest, Onias II, seems to have fallen in with the scheme of Seleucus, and refused to pay to Egypt the annual tribute of twenty talents. Small as was the amount of money involved, such refusal was regarded in Egypt as an indication of rebellion; and Ptolemy III, Euergetes, threatened to parcel out Judaea among foreign colonists, and sent Athenion, one of his favorites, as his personal envoy to announce this threat to the people of Jerusalem. The Jerusalemites were in despair, and urged Onias to yield; but the high priest remained firm or stubborn. At this painful juncture there appeared on the scene a man of determination and firmness, who, it would seem, was waiting to embrace just such an opportunity to climb the ladder of power. This man, who was to pave the way for new tendencies, was Joseph, the son of Tobias who had married the daughter of Simon the Just, and was, hence, a nephew of the high priest. Joseph, a man of charming personality, shrewd, versatile, resourceful, allowing no scruples to interfere with the accomplishment of his schemes, was a born ruler; but his nephew, the high priest, who according to law and custom was the political head of the people, stood in the way of his ambition. Joseph decided to utilize the present opportunity to remove the obstacle from his path. As soon as he heard of the ambassador's arrival at Jerusalem, he left his native place Phicol, hastened to the capital, and heaped reproaches upon his uncle for en-

dangering the political existence of his people by his refusal to pay tribute to Egypt. Finding Onias still stubborn, he volunteered to go to Alexandria as an ambassador to endeavor to pacify the anger of Euergetes. Onias accepted his offer, and Joseph immediately assembled the people in the temple to allay their fears of the threatened danger, and asked them to have confidence in his ability to avert the impending evil. The assembly thanked and applauded him, and appointed him the official leader of the people, (about 230 B. C. E.).

Joseph acted with great promptness from that moment as though his plans had matured in his mind long before this. Knowing the Greek fondness of flattery and feasting, Joseph prepared sumptuous banquets in honor of Athenion the ambassador, charmed him with his amiability, gave him rich gifts, and succeeded in persuading him to return to the Egyptian court in a cheerful frame of mind, and to assure the king that he, Joseph, would soon follow with the arrears of the tribute. As soon as Athenion left Jerusalem, Joseph, who had no means of his own, entered into negotiations with Samaritan friends or usurers for a loan of the money he would need for gorgeous raiments, chariots, and entertainments, in order to appear worthily before the Egyptian court. As the Judaeans lived only by the cultivation of their fields and gardens, were not engaged in commerce, and had no opportunity of accumulating wealth, Joseph was compelled to resort to the Samaritans who were a commercial and prosperous people.

Athenion, who arrived in Egypt before Joseph, prepared for him a favorable reception at court. The ambassador had spoken so much of Joseph's amiability and versatility that he aroused the king's curiosity; and Joseph made such a favorable impression upon Euergetes that he was invited to

the royal banquets. The ambassadors of the Palestinian and Phoenician states who had ridiculed at first the not too gorgeous appearance of Joseph, now looked with jealous eyes upon the marks of distinction shown him by the king. Joseph soon gave them the opportunity not only of envying him, but also of hating and cursing him.

In the course of Joseph's presence in Alexandria, the tax farmers of all the cities belonging to Egypt gathered in the capital to present their bids in the presence of the king and the court. It was, of course, to their common interest to bid as little as possible. The quick-witted Joseph suddenly stepped forward and pledged himself to pay twice the amount of the offer. The bidders looked stupefied at the daring Judaean who was a beggar in comparison with them. Euergetes, of course, was pleased at the prospect of an increase in his revenue, but demanded of Joseph reliable security for the fulfillment of this obligation. Joseph replied in a courtly manner that he would present two sureties of the loftiest character: the king and the queen. This witty and flattering reply pleased Euergetes mightily, and he recognized in the versatility, determination and boldness of the Judaean the safest guarantee that the increased revenue would be forthcoming. Joseph thus became the tax-farmer-in-chief of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. Upon his request, the king gave him two thousand mercenaries to assist him in the collection of the taxes by force, when necessary. On account of his military force, Joseph became the virtual ruler of Palestine, and was respected and feared all the more since he became a favorite of the king. He collected the taxes with extraordinary harshness. In Gaza and Scythopolis, whose Greek population dared to offer resistance, and heaped imprecations upon him, Joseph ordered many of the most promi-

nent and wealthiest citizens beheaded, and confiscated their property for the king.

Joseph remained the chief administrator of the taxes, or the satrap of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia for twenty-two years, and accumulated enormous wealth and power. Upon the death of Euergetes, his successor Ptolemy IV, Philopator (222-206 B. C. E.), also retained Joseph in his office; and the administrator continued his harshness in the collection of taxes to such an extent that the malicious remark was made in the hearing of the king that "Joseph stripped the flesh off the province of Syria and left only the bones." Only once, and for a short while, was Joseph's ascendancy threatened. The Seleucidan king, Antiochus, whom his sycophants named the Great, who cherished ambitious designs of conquest but lacked the energy and firmness to execute them, took advantage of the weakness of Egypt, resulting from Ptolemy Philopator's debaucheries and voluptuousness, to wrest Coele-Syria from Egypt (218 B. C. E.). Victory seemed assured, for the Egyptian generals proved traitors, and delivered their garrisons to the enemy. Samaria also was taken by Antiochus. Judaea and Jerusalem, controlled by Joseph, remained loyal to Egypt. But how long would they be able to resist the pressure of the Seleucidan armies? Happily for Joseph, the decisive hour soon struck. Philopator finally aroused himself out of his sloth, met the enemy in the neighborhood of Raphia, and inflicted upon him such a decisive defeat that Antiochus withdrew to his capital, and gave up the possession of Coele-Syria. As a result of this victory, Joseph retained his office and the favor of the king.

Joseph's relations with the Egyptian court wrought a complete change in the life of the people of Judaea, and particularly of the population of

Jerusalem. The immense wealth accumulated by Joseph, and the enrichment of his numerous subordinate tax gatherers who, as a matter of course, were Judaeans, raised the people from poverty into opulence. This sudden wealth, the respect and favor which Joseph enjoyed at the court of Philopator, the military guard at his disposal that made him feared by the population of Palestine, the remnant of the Philistines, Phœnicians, Idumeans, and even by that of the Greek Macedonian colonies, inspired him and his circle with a certain feeling of self-confidence that reacted upon the Judaeans in general, and raised them from the attitude of lowliness towards their neighbors that had characterized them heretofore. The frequent contact with the Greeks widened the horizon of the Judaeans, and they yielded to the fine taste of the Greeks, copying their architecture, painting and sculpture. The Judaeans of Alexandria who had lived in a Greek atmosphere for a century, and had become outwardly Hellenized, also reacted upon the Judaeans of Palestine who came in contact with them through Joseph's relations with the court. But these refinements of life were obtained at the cost of the strict morality that had characterized the Judaeans hitherto. The people of Judaea had hardly torn themselves loose from Asiatic influences and vices, when they fell under the sway of European influences and adopted the vices of Hellenism.

A rain of gold is not fructifying; it is rather destructive and demoralizing. The rich upstarts lost their equilibrium, admired and aped the frivolous Greek customs, and abandoned the native Judaean virtues. Greek conviviality, with its riotous hilarity, with its sumptuous banqueting where wine flowed freely to the accompaniment of music and song, were extensively imitated by the Judaeans.

But they did not stop with these comparatively innocent amusements. Joseph paid frequent visits to the court of Philopator which was a veritable cesspool of vice, where the days were spent in riotous living, and the nights in shameless debauchery carried on in brazen openness. Philopator had the ludicrous notion that he was a descendant of Dionysius (Bacchus), the god of wine, and felt himself called upon, therefore, to worship that god by means of the Dionysian orgies with their concomitant licentiousness. To find the favor of the king one had to join the Dionysian guild. Joseph enjoyed the doubtful distinction of being invited to the king's banquets, and of being received into the Dionysian guild. At one of these banquets Joseph was attracted by one of the unchaste female dancers who used to be present on such occasions, confided his passion to his brother Solymius, and asked him to bring the woman to him secretly. Solymius substituted his own daughter, whom Joseph afterwards married! And Joseph, the grandson of the high priest, Simon the Just, was then a father of seven sons! In his eagerness to flatter the king, Joseph introduced the wine festival of the Greeks in Judaea also. This festival consisted in a two days' drunken orgy and was accompanied by debauches and excesses of all kinds.

The Greek manner of life, and the Greek arts and taste introduced by Joseph, created a state of confusion in the hearts and minds of the Judaeans. Even earnest men, under the pressure of Greek influence, began to doubt the truthfulness of the traditions and teachings of Judaism, and to question whether God demanded that man deny himself the pleasures and joys of the flesh, and whether He was concerning Himself at all with the affairs of the great world of the universe, and the little world of man. The teachings of Epicurus that the gods

were shadowy beings and that pleasure was the goal of human life, views that were widely accepted in the degenerate Graeco-Macedonian world and especially in the higher circles of Alexandria, found an echo in Jerusalem also. People began to speculate about the nature of Judaism, and to disregard its teachings.

Such speculations might have acted as a stimulus to intellectual activity, were it not for the vicious dissensions which the money upstarts added to their other vices. Hatred and jealousy broke out between the seven sons of Joseph of his first marriage, and his youngest son Hyrcan, an offspring of lust and deception, and grew more violent day by day. Hyrcan was distinguished by versatility, ready wit, and shrewdness, and was, therefore, his father's favorite. When the wife of the degenerate Philopator gave birth to a son (210 B. C. E.), who later grew into the weakling Ptolemy V Epiphanes, and the representatives of all the cities and states of Coele-Syria were vying with each other in sending congratulations and gifts as an expression of their loyalty, Joseph, of course, could not be behindhand. As Joseph was not then in a position to undertake the journey himself, and requested to be represented by one of his sons, the brothers themselves agreed that Hyrcan was best qualified to represent their father. Nevertheless, they sent secret word to their friends in Alexandria to remove Hyrcan out of the way. The young Hyrcan, however, speedily gained the favor of the court. His extravagant gift, a hundred handsome male slaves for the king and as many female slaves for the queen, each carrying a talent of silver, overshadowed the presents of all the other states; and his presence of mind and ready wit made him Philopator's favorite. As he was proudly returning to Jerusalem, his brothers attacked him from

ambush, but he and his men defended themselves and two of his brothers fell dead. His father re-received him rather gloomily on account of his extravagance while in Alexandria, and Hyrcan left Jerusalem and probably returned to Alexandria.

The dissensions were thus far confined to the house of Joseph, and had, as yet, no effect upon the people, or rather upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. There was, as yet, no suspicion of the untold misery which this family, with its growing discords and its inclination towards Hellenization, was to bring upon the people. For the present Judaea enjoyed peace and prosperity. The neighboring peoples bowed their head before the leader of Judaea, and no longer dared to treat the Judaeans with contempt. Such satisfactory conditions had not prevailed in Judaea since the days of Nehemiah.

Such a time was, therefore, favorable to the production of a poetic work of art that casts a rosy hue over the surface of the present, and gives the illusion of a peaceful, happy and cheerful period. It is a love poem reflecting serene skies, green meadows, fragrant flowers, and, above all, a carefree cheerfulness of spirit as though there was nothing more serious in life than to wander amidst the hills of myrtle, to pasture "in the midst of lilies," to whisper words of love, and to revel in the bliss of the moment. The *Song of Songs,* an offspring of a period of ease and joyousness, in which the Hebrew tongue showed its capability of reproducing also sentiments of tenderness and depth of feeling, the fusion of a fine and delicate dialog and picturesque description of nature, was, in all probability, composed in this period of calm which preceded the storm. The ingenious poet who was well acquainted with the Greek world, knew the charm of its language, and borrowed some of its artistic tricks, and especially the form,

in which a shepherd and shepherdess appear on the scene, and hold an amorous conversation. But the poet was to utilize the very harmlessness of this ethereal poetry for the purpose of calling attention to the evils of the times. In contrast to the impure, unchaste love of the Greek world, he created an ideal being, a shepherdess, Shulamith, the beautiful daughter of Abinadab, who cherishes a deep, inner, inextinguishable love for a shepherd who "pastures among the lilies," but remains pure and chaste nevertheless, and just because of it. Her beauty is enhanced by her accomplishments; she possesses a melodious voice; a sweet, captivating eloquence; and every movement of her dancing betrays grace and loveliness. She loves the shepherd with all the ardor of her young soul, and this very ardent love protects her from any impure act, from any indecent word or unchaste thought. Just as her eyes are dove-like, so is her heart dove-like in its innocence. In the flower language of the most delicate poetry, the author of the Song of Songs points out the evils of his time, the superficial, sensual, purchasable love, the unchastity of the public female dancers and singers, the numberless courtesans, the effeminating city life, and the emasculating joys of the banquet and wine. There are three glorious literary monuments in the Hebrew language that throw light upon a dark background in the conditions of the Judaean people. The dramatic dialog of Job betrays a growing doubt as to the existence of a moral order in the universe; the idyllic Book of Ruth hints at the dissensions caused by the question of mixed marriages, and the Song of Songs at the moral degeneracy in the Judaean community.

With the death of Joseph (about 208 B. C. E.), the dissensions among his sons increased, and were augmented by political occurrences. The adminis-

tration of the taxes probably passed over to Joseph's sons upon the death of their father; and as Hyrcan was the only one known to court, and a favorite of Philopator, he undoubtedly received the preference. This embittered his brothers against him still more. Upon his return to Jerusalem to take charge of his office, his brothers and their partisans made an open and violent attack upon him to force him to leave the city. Hyrcan also found partisans. The dissensions spread, and threatened to involve Jerusalem in a civil war. The high priest Simon II, son of Onias II, who had contributed to the rise of Joseph, sided with the older brothers, and their faction grew so strong in consequence that Hyrcan was compelled to leave Jerusalem. It is probable that he hastened to Alexandria to lay his grievance against his brothers before the court. But he received little satisfaction, for his patron Philopator died soon after (206 B. C. E.), and Egypt herself became involved in disruptions and revolutions as a consequence. Two ambitious kings, Antiochus the Great of Syria and Philip of Macedonia, took advantage of the weakness of Egypt to dismember and divide between them the kingdom and its possessions.

Joseph's elder sons, or the sons of Tobias as they were named, out of hatred to Hyrcan and to the Egyptian court that had favored him, decided to embrace the cause of Antiochus, and they formed a Seleucidan party. The Tobiades are described as traitors and degenerates, and in the course of events, did prove themselves devoid of conscience, sacrificing the welfare of the country for the satisfaction of personal vengeance or appetites. They opened the gates of Jerusalem to Antiochus, and paid him homage. The Ptolemaic party either yielded voluntarily to superior force or was suppressed. Thus, after a century's sway over Coele-

Syria and Judaea, the Ptolemys made way for the Seleucidae (202 B. C. E.).

When the Etolian general Scopas, with the mercenary troops under his command, was hired by the Egyptians, and began the struggle against Antiochus and took possession of the territory on both sides of the Jordan, the Tobiades made desperate efforts to hold out against the Ptolemeans. But Scopas and his savage soldiery conquered, and naturally spared no one. They took Jerusalem by storm, wrought havoc in the city and temple, and put to the sword every one who was pointed out to them as an enemy (about 201 B. C. E.). Many inhabitants of Jerusalem sought safety in flight. Scopas left an Etolian garrison in the citadel of Baris, Acra, northwest of the temple, to hold the rest of the Jerusalemites in check, as well as to secure a point of vantage for the future. The Ptolemean party of Jerusalem thus gained the upper hand. But Scopas was unable to accomplish the reconquest of Judaea and Coele-Syria for the royal boy Ptolemy V Epiphanes. In a battle near the mountain city Panion, at the foot of Mount Hermon, Scopas sustained a decisive defeat. Judaea again became the battle ground for the two hostile parties. She was like a ship on a storm-tossed sea. Both combatants inflicted severe wounds upon her, and many Judaeans were carried into captivity.

Having recaptured the countries east and west of the Jordan as far as Samaria, Antiochus marched upon Jerusalem. The elders and the priests went out to meet him, received him into the city, and furnished provision for his army and his elephants. The task of dislodging the Etolian garrison from the Acra was entrusted to Ptolemy, son of Meropos, one of the Syrian generals, in which he was assisted by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Antiochus appreciated the assistance and the loyalty of the Judaeans, and ordered Ptolemy to assure them of his royal favor. At his command the temple was repaired, Jerusalem and other ruined cities were rebuilt; he granted the Judaeans many liberties, and the privilege to govern themselves in accordance with their own laws, and released all the captives. In addition, he issued a decree prohibiting any non-Judaean from entering the sacred precincts of the temple, and from bringing into Jerusalem any impure animal or thing that would tend to defile the city from the Judaean point of view.

Anitiochus retained possession of Judaea and Coele-Syria, and was turning his attention to Egypt, the conquest of which seemed easy owing to the weakness of its government under the nonage of its king. However, thwarted in his designs by the Romans who had just captured Carthage and defeated Hannibal, and were looking for new fields of conquest, Antiochus conceived the plan of declaring war against the Romans, and, after defeating them, to make himself master of all Asia Minor and Greece. To secure his hold upon the cities of Asia Minor, he transplanted two thousand Judaean families whose loyalty and valor were beyond question, from their former homes in Babylonia and Mesopotamia to Lydia and Phrygia (about 198 B. C. E.), in the anticipation that they would suppress any attempts at uprising on the part of the ever restive Greeks. These Judaean colonists were granted complete religious freedom, full civil rights, and other privileges, and formed the nucleus of the Judaean communities of the great cities of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Sardis and Pergamus. These communities preserved their attachment and fidelity to Jerusalem and to the temple for centuries.

But the ambitious designs of Antiochus soon came to naught. Overestimating his own power, and underestimating the strength of the Romans, Antiochus sustained such a humiliating defeat at the hands of the latter in the battle of Magnesia (late autumn, 190 B. C. E.), that he was compelled to yield to them all his conquests in Greece and in a portion of Asia Minor, to deliver to them his entire fleet, and to pay them an annual war indemnity of fifteen thousand talents for twelve years. As a pledge of peace and of the payment of this indemnity, he had to send his second son, Antiochus Epiphanes, who was destined to write a bloody page in the annals of the Judaean people, as a hostage to Rome. Antiochus' overestimation of his own power proved fatal to the Seleucidan kingdom. To enable them to pay the war indemnity, the Syrian kings had to resort to the robbing of the temples; and these assaults upon the sanctuaries rendered the kings odious, and stirred to rebellion even the most submissive peoples. Antiochus, the so called Great, met his death as a consequence of an attempted temple robbery (187 B. C. E.). His son also raised his hand against the sanctuaries; and his attempts led to the elevation and the invigoration of the Judaean people, as well as to his own humiliation and to the acceleration of the fall of the Seleucidan kingdom.

As a result of the conflict over the possession of Coele-Syria, with its consequent political dissensions in Judaea, the disintegration within the Judaean community which began with the innovations introduced by Joseph, the tax administrator, increased and grew at a rapid pace. The Tobiades and their partisans scrupled little at the means they employed to further their own interests and to destroy their opponents. They endeavored, first of all, to seek the support of non-Judaean peo-

ples. The Judaeans were hated both by the Greeks who had settled in Palestine, and, above all, by the aborigines who could not forgive the mistreatment they had received at the hands of the Judaean tax gatherers. The ancient hatreds as well as the ancient names survived, so that the events of this period read like a page from the history of the Judges. There were still Edomites and Philistines, and they still cherished their internecine hatred of the Judaeans, and betrayed it on every occasion. The Samaritans of the north were also similarly disposed. To win the friendship of their neighbors, and to gain the respect as well as the protection of the Greek military commanders and other officials, the worldly-minded among the Judaeans thought it best to adopt the speech, customs and habits of the neighboring peoples, and, above all, to become Hellenized. Jerusalemites who had already been Hellenized, decided to rear the Judaean youth after the Greek fashion, to develop their physical strength by means of athletic games, of running and wrestling, and to render them fit for military service. These Judaean Hellenists, self-evidently composed of the rich and the prominent, formed a strong party in Judaea. The son of a high priest, Joshua, or Jason, as he styled himself, and other priests joined that party, and its leaders were the still living, unprincipled sons and grandsons of Joseph, the Tobiades. Inasmuch as the Judaean laws and customs were opposed to these innovations, and especially to the exposing of the body in the athletic games which the Judaeans regarded as indecent, and prevented the Hellenization of the Judaean people, the Hellenists determined to abolish the ancestral laws and customs altogether. The object of their desires was to become totally amalgamated with the Greeks. The Hellenists did not content themselves with tearing away

the fences around the law created by Ezra, Nehemiah, and the high court of the elders; they were determined upon uprooting the very foundation stones of Judaism.

As happens often in history, when a people is not dull excesses on the one side will produce excesses on the other side. Those Judaeans who looked on with sorrow and anger at the attempts of the Hellenists organized themselves into a group in order to preserve and hold fast to their ancestral customs, and formed the Society of the Pious, or Assideans (Hassidim). These ultra-pious regarded every religious usage as sacred and inviolate. One can hardly conceive a more striking contrast than that existing between these two parties. They understood one another no more than if they had never been sons of the same race and people. What the Hellenists cherished most ardently, the Assideans regarded as depravity and outrageous treason, and called their opponents "violators of the law," "evil doers against the covenant"; and what the Assideans held dear and sacred, the Hellenists looked upon as folly, and as a hindrance to the well-being and existence of the community. To the Assideans belonged undoubtedly the two teachers of that period, Josè (Joseph) son of Joezer, of the little town of Zereda, and Josè, son of Johanan, of Jerusalem. They were the heads of two schools, the one laying more emphasis upon the theoretic study of the law, and the other upon practical piety. Josè of Zereda used to impress upon his disciples: "Let thy house be a house of assembly for the wise, dust thyself in the dust of their feet, and drink their words thirstily." His contemporary of Jerusalem taught, on the other hand: "Let thy house be wide open; let the poor be frequenters of thy house, and do not talk too much with a woman," the last phrase being

evidently a protest against the Hellenists who went to the other extreme.* As is always the case when factions arise within a people, the great mass of the Judaeans stood midway between the two extremes, the Assideans and the Hellenists. The mass of the people was rather pleased with the refinements and comforts of life introduced by the Greeks, and would have none of the gloomy severity of the Assideans; on the other hand it was not willing to break with its past, and still less to allow these innovations to undermine the ancestral faith. But, as a matter of course, even those who were neutral were drawn into the passionate conflict between the Assideans and the Hellenists, and had to take sides with the one party or the other.

For the time being, the pious, or nationalists, had the upper hand in the conduct of the affairs of the commonwealth. The then high priest Onias III, son of Simon II, who was likewise the political head of Judaea, is described as a man of mild character, but zealous for the law, an enemy of evil-doers, a promoter of piety, holding in strong check the excesses of the Hellenists. For that reason he was an object of hatred to the latter, and his chief enemies were the three equally audacious brothers: Simon, Onias or Menelaus and Lysimachus, members of a prominent Benjaminite family. The Tobiades likewise hated the high priest, not alone because of his decided aversion to their innovations, but also because of his friendship for Hyrcan whom his brothers and relatives still persecuted with their burning hatred. Hyrcan seems to have been a favorite also of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the young king of Egypt, who appointed him governor or tax farmer over a district east of the Jordan. Hyrcan accumulated great treasure by plundering the Arabs or Nabateans who

* Fuen, as quoted by R. I., page 331.

lived near Heshbon and Medeba with as little consideration as his father Joseph showed in Coele-Syria. With part of that treasure he built himself, on a rock near Heshbon, a magnificent palace and fortress in one, which he called Tyrus. The surplus of his wealth he sent, from time to time, for safe keeping in the temple of Jerusalem which was held inviolate even by the pagans, and which was in the custody of the high priest Onias with whom he was on friendly terms. This friendship of Onias with Hyrcan, and his strong aversion to the practices of the Hellenists, embittered Simon, their leader, and the Tobiades against the high priest, and led to collisions and riots. Simon, who held an office in the temple, seems to have become intractable as a result of his enmity to the high priest, and Onias banished him, and probably also the Tobiades, from Jerusalem. This stirred the flames of dissension to higher fury.

Simon, either alone or at the suggestion of his Hellenistic friends, conceived an infamous scheme of wreaking his vengeance upon the high priest. He betook himself to Apollonius, the military chief of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, and informed him that vast treasures were held for safe keeping in the temple of Jerusalem that did not belong to the sanctuary, and he suggested that these be confiscated for the king. It is self evident that Apollonius lost no time in sending this information to the king, Seleucus IV (187-175 B. C. E.), who was in urgent need of funds to pay the annual war indemnity to the Romans, and who immediately ordered his treasurer, Heliodorus, to hasten to Jerusalem and to secure the treasure from the temple. As was to be expected, Onias refused to comply with the unlawful demand of Heliodorus to deliver the treasure over to him. Heliodorus, on the other hand, in accordance with the royal

command, made ready to force his way into the temple. Great excitement prevailed in Jerusalem. That a heathen should dare enter the sanctuary, and especially for the purpose of plundering it! At this juncture something happened that prevented Heliodorus from accomplishing his purpose. It is impossible to ascertain what has actually occured; the pious legend tells of the appearance of an angel on a white horse who struck Heliodorus to the ground as he was about to enter the sanctuary. Simon, however, did not give up his attempt to bring about the fall of the high priest, and even went to the extent of hiring assassins to remove him out of the way. Onias realized that the peace and order of Jerusalem could be restored only by explaining the situation to the king, Seleucus, by exposing the injustice of his enemies, and by obtaining royal protection against them. Accordingly he decided to go to Antioch, and appointed his brother Joshua, or Jason, his deputy in the office of the high-priesthood. During the absence of Onias, the Hellenists employed all sorts of intrigue in order to destroy him, and capture the office in their own hands. A high priest belonging to their party would not only give them control of the temple treasure, but would also be in a position to introduce such Greek innovations as he pleased, and lend to them the weight of his spiritual office. The Hellenists were already so degenerated that nothing was sacred to them. But though the plots against Onias were carried on secretly at first, they soon became known, and excited indignation among the followers of the high priest who regarded as a crime the attempt made to upset the old order, and to render sacred recollections of old odious.

A gnomic poet, Jesus (Joshua) Sirach, son of Eleazar of Jerusalem, whose heart was perturbed

by sorrow and grief at the untoward conditions of his native city, undertook to compose a book of proverbs in which he was to point out the shortcomings of his time, and by which he was to lead his generation back to the right path of old. He belonged to the last gnomic poets, and was well acquainted with the Torah, the prophets, and other didactic literature. He had, above all, absorbed himself in the collection of Solomonic proverbs, and acquired their form, though not their artistic simplicity. He did not belong to the party of the stern Assideans who denied themselves and denounced in others, the enjoyment even of the innocent pleasures of life. He spoke rather appreciatively of sociable meals with wine and music. In a prettily worded irony he reproaches the enemies of joy who banish cheerfulness from the banquet by their too serious conversations:

"Speak, thou that art the elder, for it becometh
thee, but with sound judgment;
And hinder not music.
Pour not out words where there is a musician,
And shew not forth wisdom out of time,
A concert of music in a banquet of wine,
Is as a signet of carbuncle set in gold."
(Ecclesiasticus XXXII: 4-6)

He also takes to task the too pious who ignored medicines and physicians in their belief that bodily ails might be cured by prayer, and he advises them that both medicine and physicians are the instruments of God for the purpose of healing the body. But he is none the less indignant at the moral and religious laxity of his contemporaries, denounces in stinging terms the arrogance, deceit, and wantonness of the rich, the worshippers of Mammon, who were mostly Hellenists; he condemns the un-

ANGELS EXPELLING HELIODORUS FROM THE TEMPLE

By Doré.

chaste relation of the sexes, and admonishes against contact with female dancers and singers, the attractive vice which the Judaeans learned from the Greeks. The picture he paints of the daughter of Israel, if not exaggerated, is far from flattering.

Sirach regarded the contempt for the teachings of Judaism as the root of all this degeneracy, and the main object of his book was to inspire a wholesome respect for the tenets of the ancestral faith. He also touches upon the audacious intrigues of the Hellenists against the high priest, and their attempts to remove him from office and to appoint in his stead one of their own creatures who is not even a descendant of Aaron. The ambitious plotters had raised a question which was then agitating the higher circles of Jerusalem: Must the office of the high-priesthood be an hereditary one? Sirach warns his contemporaries against such a conspiracy to change the ancient order of things. He does not, indeed, speak out openly, he only hints at it:

"Why doth one day excel another,
Whereas all the light of every day in the year is of the sun?
By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished:
And He altered seasons and feasts.
Some of them hath He made high days, and hallowed them,
And some of them hath he made ordinary days,
And all men are from the ground,
And Adam was created of earth,
Yet in much knowledge the Lord hath divided them,
And made their ways diverse,
Some of them hath He blessed and exalted
And some of them hath He sanctified, and set near himself." (Ibid. XXXIII:8-13.)

In other words, God had selected the house of Aaron as a sacred family, just as He had appointed a certain house as his sanctuary, and just as He had distinguished certain days as holy festivals; and man, in his imprudence, dare not change this order of things. By many illustrations from the history of Israel, he points out to his contemporaries the happy consequences resulting from a faithful obedience to the laws of God, and the evils resulting from their violation. He cites a long series of historic personages, describing briefly their deeds or misdeeds, and expatiates upon the fate of Korah and his crowd who rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron. This was to serve as a warning to his contemporaries who were jealous of the high priest, the descendant of Aaron, and who might suffer the fate of Korah and his crowd as a consequence. For a similar reason he dwells at length upon the virtues of Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, who atoned for Israel's sins. The unhappy period of the division of the kingdom and the subsequent sinfulness of Israel, he passes over hurriedly, and dwells long upon the activity of the prophets. Of the post-exilic period he mentions only Zerubbabel, the high priest Jeshua, and Nehemiah. Towards the end of his historic reminiscences, he glorified the personality, the deeds, and the high-priestly dignity of Simon the Just. As Simon was the ancestor of the contemporaneous high-priestly family as well as of that of the Tobiades, his memory was to serve as an example and as a warning to the ambitious plotters against the high-priesthood.

But harmony was no longer possible; the dissensions grew in bitterness, and the intrigues and depravity of the Greek sympathizers brought the Judaean people to the very brink of destruction.

CHAPTER V

THE VIOLENT HELLENIZATION UNDER ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

(175-168 B. C. E.)

There appeared on the scene a man, a prince, who seemed appointed to render the existing confusion in Judaea worse confounded, and to call down upon the house of Israel such dark days as it has never experienced heretofore. This man, stigmatized by history, was Antiochus Epiphanes. He was one of those persons who seem to possess a dual personality, composed of wicked and noble impulses, at once cunning and capricious, small in great enterprises and great in petty affairs. For this reason his character was a puzzle to his contemporaries who were unable to decide whether the many follies he committed as king and which made him ridiculous in the eyes of the people and gained for him the nickname of Epimanes (the madman), were due to a natural perversion of mind, or were a mask covering some secret design. The school wherein he spent his youth contributed not a little towards the shaping of his character, for he had spent twelve years at Rome as a hostage. With the conquest of Carthage and of the Macedonians

and Syrians, Rome had just then become the capital of the world, and was undergoing the transition from the austerity of the Catos to the licentiousness of the Claudians, with all the unspeakable vices and corruptions of the Greeks. However, what Antiochus learned in Rome, above all, was contempt of man and his habits; the impudence, iron-heartedness that knows no mercy, and the malice that plays with its victim before it devours it.

Antiochus was shrewd enough to gain the permission to leave Rome and to have his nephew Demetrius, the son of his brother, King Seleucus Philopator, sent to Rome as hostage in his stead. While on his way to Syria, probably with the intention of dethroning his brother, Heliodorus, a courtier murdered Seleucus (175 B. C. E.), and took possession of the throne. Was Antiochus altogether innocent of this conspiracy? He was then sojourning in Athens on his way home. His father's enemy Eumenes, king of Pergamum, and his brother Attalus rendered Antiochus the great service of putting Heliodorus to flight and of placing Antiochus upon the throne of Syria and Asia Minor though that throne belonged, of right, to his nephew Demetrius who was then detained in Rome as a hostage. The Romans favored the usurper, in agreement with their policy of undermining those states that were not as yet completely in their power, by sowing discord in the reigning families. But Antiochus intended to out-Roman the Romans in deceit. A Judaean seer thus describes his ascension: "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they had not given the honor of the kingdom, but he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. . . . And after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up and conquer with a few people. Suddenly, with the

leaders of the country shall he appear, and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them (the leaders) the prey, and spoil and riches" (Dan. xi, 21, 23-4). Antiochus introduced the gladiatorial combats in Antioch by compelling captives of war or slaves to fight with weapons until one or the other fell dead, for the amusement of the spectators. Respect for any divinity, Antiochus possessed none: "The gods of his fathers he regarded not, and regarded no god, but raised himself above everything" (Daniel 2:37).

The Judaeans thus became subject to the caprices of this monster. Had harmony prevailed in Judaea, the country might have escaped his notice; but the dissensions that then raged in Jerusalem attracted his attention to the Judaean people, and the Hellenists themselves demanded his intervention in the internal affairs of Judaea. They first called his attention to the hated Hyrcan, who was collecting taxes in the name of Egypt from his mountain fortress of Tyrus. Fearing an ignominious death, Hyrcan committed suicide, and his possessions fell into the hands of Antiochus. The Hellenists then carried out their plan of bringing about the downfall of their enemy, Onias the high priest. His own brother Joshua, Jason, promised Antiochus a large sum of money to appoint him to the high-priesthood instead of his brother, and the king who was always in need of money accepted this offer without hesitation (174 B. C. E.). In addition, Onias was charged with being a partisan of the Ptolemys. The accuser of the Hellenists thus became the accused. In the next place, the Hellenists, or Jason, requested Antiochus to recognize those Judaeans who would practice Greek sports as Antiochans, or Macedonians or full citizens, and admit them to the public meetings and

games of the Greeks. The Greeks always took their sports seriously, and regarded them as the main object of life. The Greeks who had settled in Palestine and Phoenicia preserved the national bond of a common ancestry by means of the quadrennial Olympic games which they brought with them in their new homes. The admission of non-Greeks to participate in these games was regarded an an extraordinary honor, as though it conferred the privileges of Greek aristocracy. Jason and the Hellenists, by introducing gymnasia in Jerusalem, sought to obtain the higher rights of Greek citizenship for the Judaeans also, in order, thereby, to diminish the hatred and the contempt from which they suffered. As soon as this privilege was granted by Antiochus, Jason converted the Acra (Acropolis), northwest of the temple, into a gymnasium for youths, and an ephebium for boys. Probably Greek teachers were hired to train Judaean youths and men in the exercises that were necessary to render them eligible to compete in the Olympic games which consisted in foot races in a stadium, in jumping, wrestling, throwing the disc, and boxing.

The incompatibility of such sports, having their origin in an altogether different view of life, with the spirit of Judaism soon manifested itself. The Greek custom demanded disrobing for participation in such combats, and the Judean youths had to learn to suppress their sense of shame and to expose their bodies in the sight of the very temple in which no steps to the altar were permitted that the nakedness of the body might not become visible. Moreover, Judaean youths submitted to painful operations in order to remove the signs of the covenant which distinguished them visibly from other people, and thus to avoid the ridicule of the Greeks on the occasion of the Olympic games.

Youths flocked to the gymnasium, and young priests neglected the services of the temple to participate in the exercises of the palestra and of the stadium. The pious among the Judaeans looked on with horror upon these evidences of estrangement from Judaism, but held their peace. But even the followers of Jason soon became discontented when this imitation of foreign customs led to the denial of the very essence of Judaism. When the Olympiad was celebrated at Tyre (June 172 B. C. E.), an occasion on which sacrifice used to be offered to the Greek god Heracles, as the reputed founder of these games, Jason selected a number of Judaean representatives who were eligible to participate in the sports, and gave them along a sum of money with which to purchase sacrifices for Heracles. But these athletes, schooled in Greek manners and customs though they were, regarded the presentation of gifts to Heracles as a participation in idol-worship, and accepted their mission only on condition that the money which they took along be used for other purposes. So deeply rooted was the conception of God as taught by Judaism even in the hearts of those who had identified themselves with Greek life and were members of the Hellenistic party.

The discord in Jerusalem, meanwhile, had grown to such a point that evil consequences could no longer be avoided. The rabid Hellenists were beginning to form plots against Jason also, and were determined to capture the high-priesthood in their own hands, either out of ambition, or because Jason seemed to them too nationalistic or not energetic enough in overthrowing the ancestral customs. One of these was Menelaus, a brother of Simon the informer who had suggested the robbing of the temple to Seleucus. Jason used to send his annual tribute to the king through him. On

one such occasion, Menelaus promised Antiochus annually three hundred talents more than Jason did, if the king would appoint him high priest; and he boasted of the great respect he was held in by people which would enable him to carry out the Hellenization of the Judaeans with greater energy. Antiochus did not hesitate to appoint the higher bidder high priest (172-171 B. C. E.), and sent along an officer, Sostrates, with a company of soldiers to Jerusalem for the purpose of suppressing any resistance to the new arrangement, and of collecting the promised sum of money. Sostrates placed his soldiers in the fortified Acra to hold the Jerusalemites in check, and announced, in the name of the king, Jason's removal from office. Jason either fled or was banished from Jerusalem.

As a result of this change, the confusion in Jerusalem increased. The majority of the people was indignant at the usurpation of Menelaus who was not a member of the high-priestly family, but a Benjaminite, and whose aversion to the ancestral faith was well known. The half-Hellenized Judaeans who did not care to break with their religion altogether, and the friends of Jason also resented the appointment of Menelaus. The discontented, however, had to restrain themselves for fear of the Cyprian garrison which was at the disposal of Menelaus, though the excitement among the people was so great that it had to break loose at the first opportunity. The occasion was given by Menelaus himself. He had promised Antiochus more compensation for the high-priesthood than he was able to pay, and the king was angry and demanded an explanation. Menelaus had to present himself at Antioch. Before his departure, he appointed his brother Lysimachus, as worthless as himself, his deputy, and carried away with him many sacred vessels and other sacred gifts belong-

ing to the temple, from the sale of which he was to complete the sum of money he had promised to the king. Antiochus was then absent from Antioch, and the government was in the hands of his representative Andronicus. When the deposed Onias III, who was still sojourning at Antioch, heard of the atrocity, he accused Menelaus of temple robbery, a crime which, even among the Greeks, was then regarded as heinous and deserving of extraordinary punishment. This accusation sounded the doom of Onias. Menelaus bribed Andronicus, the representative of the king, to render Onias harmless before the king had an opportunity of hearing about the temple robbery and the bribery connected with it. Andronicus lured Onias out of the temple of Apollo in Daphne, near Antioch, whither he had fled for protection, and murdered him on the spot (171 B. C. E.). The murder of the high priest created such a stir even among the Syrian Greeks, that Antiochus, upon his return, was compelled to impose the death sentence upon the murderer Andronicus.

As Menelaus was still in need of large sums of money with which to satisfy the king and to put him in good humor, he ordered his brother Lysimachus to deliver to him still more costly vessels of the temple, and Lysimachus complied with his brother's request. This second robbery of the temple so exasperated the people that it came to open riots. Judaeans from outside of Jerusalem flocked to the capital to unite their strength with the Jerusalemites in wreaking their vengeance upon the perpetrators of the sacrilege. Lysimachus had three thousand armed followers under the leadership of an old man named Avran; but the angered people attacked them with stones and sticks, blinded them with heaps of ashes thrown in their faces, scattered them, killed many of them, trampled

others under foot, and put Lysimachus to death in front of the temple treasury which he had robbed. Menelaus, of course, lodged a complaint with the king against the uprisings in Jerusalem, and Antiochus agreed to hold a court of inquiry at Tyre, and to listen to the complaint and the defense. The people of Judaea sent three elders as their representatives; and they pointed out the guilt of Lysimachus and of Menelaus of the temple robbery and their responsibility for the subsequent bloody riots so clearly and convincingly, that the high priest seemed on the point of receiving his just deserts. But the resourceful Menelaus succeeded in winning over, by a bribe, a man of his own ilk who stood high in the favor of the king. From his high seat of judgment, Antiochus pronounced Menelaus innocent, and condemned the three representatives of Jerusalem to death. The Tyrians who witnessed this mockery upon justice showed their displeasure at the judgment of the king by their sympathetic participation in the funeral procession held in honor of the three martyrs. But Menelaus and wickedness triumphed. He retained his power over the people that hated him violently.

In order not to sink under this violent hatred, Menelaus planned new intrigues and new crimes, and poisoned the ears of the king against his enemies, that is, against the entire people. On the one side he brought the accusation that his enemies were partisans of the Egyptian court who were persecuting him only because of his loyalty to Syria. On the other hand, he, the officially recognized high priest, slandered all Judaism, and denounced the law of Moses as a law that taught the Judaeans to despise all men, that prohibited social intercourse with strangers, and was opposed to the welfare of mankind—a law that must be destroyed. As Antiochus was then revolving in

his mind the conquest of Egypt, the slanders of Menelaus fell upon attentive ears, and he began to look upon the Judaeans with mistrust. He could not regard it with indifference to have an enemy behind his back while he was engaged in a dangerous expedition to Egypt.

It is never difficult to find pretexts for war, and the crafty Antiochus soon found one. His sister Cleopatra, the wife of Ptolemy IV of Egypt, died, and left two young sons, Philometor and Physcon, who were still in their minority. The former was the titular king, but the government was in the hands of his two guardians, Eulaus and Lenaus. Antiochus pretended that he had to protect his nephew against his guardians who were plotting to restore Syria to Egypt, and that he had to gather troops and attack Egypt in order to forestall such a move. However, he delayed his attack upon Egypt for fear of the Romans. But as the Romans became ever more deeply involved in a fresh war with Perseus, king of Macedonia, he finally decided to cross the Egyptian border (fall of 170 B. C. E.), and penetrated ever further into Egyptian territory. The two guardians fled with the young king Philometor, and Antiochus became master of all northern Egypt, and approached Alexandria and made ready to besiege it. The people of Alexandria selected the younger brother, Ptolemy Physcon, as king, and defended the city with such determination that Antiochus was compelled to raise the siege. Antiochus, therefore, opened communication with Philometor, induced him to come to Egypt, made an alliance with him, and pretended that he wished to continue the war only for his nephew's protection.

The outcome of the war was watched with the utmost anxiety in Judaea. If Egypt should prove victorious, the probability was that the unhappy

conditions brought about by the hated high priest would come to an end. The Egyptian court was favorably disposed towards the nationalistic party, and received with open arms all those who had sought safety in Egypt from the tyranny of Antiochus and Menelaus. All of a sudden the report spread that Antiochus had fallen in battle! Intense excitement followed. The deposed high priest Jason who had found protection in Ammonitis, hastened to Jerusalem at the head of an army of one thousand men to take possession of Jerusalem. Menelaus, of course, barred the gates of Jerusalem and fought the approaching army from the walls. A veritable civil war broke out as a result of the ambition of the two men who were seeking the high-priesthood as a means to power. As but few of the inhabitants of Jerusalem supported the hated Menelaus, Jason and his men succeeded in entering Jerusalem. Menelaus sought safety behind the walls of the Acra.

Antiochus had, meanwhile, left Egypt with the rich booty he had accumulated, possibly for the purpose of gathering fresh troops for his army. As soon as he learned of the occurrences at Jerusalem, his anger against the Judaean people and its law burst forth in a fury, and he gave vent to all the harshness, the evil and inhumanity of his nature. He fell upon Jerusalem suddenly, massacred men, women and children for three days without distinction between friend and foe, penetrated into the temple and into the Holy of Holies to show his contempt for the God of Israel, removed everything of value from the temple, the golden altar, the candelabra, the table and all golden vessels, and as much of the treasure as was still left. Menelaus acted as his guide in this sacrilege. In words of scorn he blasphemed the God of Israel whose omnipotence his worshippers praised so

highly, and to extenuate the murder of the innocents and the sacrileges committed by him, he spread abroad a fabrication of malicious lies and inventions that brought Judaism into disrepute among the civilized nations for a long time. Antiochus spread the report that he had found in the Holy of Holies the stone image of a man with a long beard seated on a donkey and holding a book in his hand. This image he took to represent Moses who gave the Judaeans the abominable laws that taught them to hate all men, and to bear malice against all nations. Since that time, the Greeks and the Romans believed that the Judaeans worshipped an ass! Antiochus probably circulated also another abominable lie to blacken the Judaeans among the nations. This was to the effect that in the temple, he had found a Greek, lying on a bed, who pleaded to be set free, and who told him that it was an anuual Judaean custom to feed a captured Greek, and then kill him and eat his intestines, while the participants took an oath of hatred and destruction to the Greeks on that occasion. Whether this malicious slander was a direct invention of Antiochus, or was put into his mouth by other liars, it gave Judaism an unenviable reputation among the nations of the earth as a religion that commands and teaches its followers to hate all other peoples. Such was the result of the amalgamation with the Greeks for which the Hellenists have striven for a half century, and for which they sacrificed their faith and their morality!

Jerusalem was plunged in mourning, and the House of Jacob was in despair. "Leaders and elders moaned; young men and young women were muffled; the beauty of the women was defaced: the bridegroom raised a wail instead of a song, and the bride in her bridal chamber was in mourning" (Macc. I, 1). But still sadder days were in

store for Judaea. Antiochus undertook another war upon Egypt, and the Judaean people were to suffer for his failure. Through the efforts of their sister and the Romans, the two royal brothers Philometor and Physcon became reconciled, and the former was acknowledged as king at Alexandria. This aroused the ire of Antiochus. As the Romans were still involved in the Macedonian war, Antiochus thought it safe to attack Egypt a second time (168 B. C. E.), invaded that country without meeting resistance, and penetrated again to the neighborhood of Alexandria. The kings of Egypt had, meanwhile, sent ambassadors to Rome to plead for help and for the intervention of the Senate. After the victory at Pydna, where the Macedonians were defeated and Perseus fled (22nd of June, 168 B. C. E), three Roman legates betook themselves to the camp of Antiochus, and handed him the command of the Senate to leave Egypt within a short time. When the Syrian king asked for time to think the matter over, the gruff Popilius Laenas drew a circle in the dust, and indicated that before he left the circle Antiochus must decide whether he was for peace or for war with Rome. Knowing the inexorableness of Roman commands, Antiochus decided to leave Egypt at once (end of June, 168), and returned to his capital disappointed with himself, angry, and humiliated. He felt his humiliation all the more keenly, because, in the presence of the Romans he had to suppress his real feelings and assume an attitude of satisfaction and friendliness.

This suppressed wrath he vented again in unheard-of atrocities upon the Judaeans. It is possible that the Judaeans had betrayed their satisfaction at his humiliation, and regarded it as a punishment of God upon the blasphemer. At any rate, Apollonius, one of his generals, arrived in Jerusa-

lem with a troop of soldiers, speaking words of friendship, and apparently on a mission of peace, when all of a sudden, on a Sabbath day, when resistance was out of the question, the bloodthirsty Macedonians fell upon the inhabitants, massacred the men and the youths, and carried away the women and children to the slave market. Many houses of the capital were destroyed, and the walls of the city were torn down. Jerusalem was no longer to be an important city. The temple itself was spared; probably Antiochus intended to use it for other purposes; but its wooden gates were burned, and its halls were demolished with axe and hammer. Owing to former robberies, there was nothing of value in the temple to rob. Only the Hellenists, the Syrian soldiers, and foreigners moved about the ruined places. "Jerusalem was a stranger to her children." The temple was deserted. The only activity displayed in the city was at the Acra where the Syrian garrison was stationed. The Hellenists took up their residence there. To protect it against possible assault, the Acra was further strengthened by strong and high walls and towers that overtopped the temple, and was provided with a large supply of weapons and provisions.

The work of devastation, however, grew painful even to Menelaus, the cause of all these atrocities. It was rather disagreeable to be the high priest of a temple that had no worshippers, or the head of a people that turned their backs upon their chief. In such a mood, he hit upon another nefarious scheme: to advise Antiochus to destroy Judaism root and branch, and to force its adherents to adopt the Greek cults. Antiochus who hated both the Judaeans and their religion, was well pleased with the suggestion of Menelaus, and determined to carry it into execution with his characteristic

tenacity. He must overcome not only the Judaean people, but also the Judaean God. Antiochus, who was indifferent to the gods of his own fathers, regarded it as a personal affront that the Judaeans, as a people, through all the bloody persecutions to which he had already subjected them, still trusted in the God of their fathers, and hoped that He would destroy the haughty blasphemer. He must challenge and conquer the God of Israel. Accordingly, Antiochus issued a decree which was promulgated by messengers in all the cities of Judaea, to the effect that all the Judaeans must cease to follow the laws of their God, and must offer sacrifice to Greek gods only. Altars and statues of the gods were to be erected everywhere for that purpose. To strike Judaism to the very heart, Antiochus ordered that its followers should be compelled to offer as sacrifices only impure animals, and especially swine. The three symbols of Judaism that strikingly distinguished the Judaean from the heathen, circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath and holidays, and the dietary laws, were particularly interdicted under severe penalties. The execution of the king's decree was entrusted to officials who were empowered to inflict the penalty of death upon anyone who dared violate it.

The beginning was made with the temple of Jerusalem. Antiochus sent prominent men from Antioch to Jerusalem to dedicate the temple to the Olympic Zeus. A swine was offered on the altar in the outer court; its blood was sprinkled upon that altar, and in the Holy of Holies; its meat was cooked, and the broth poured upon the scrolls of the Torah. The high priest Menelaus and other Judaean Hellenists had to partake of the swine meat. The scrolls of the Torah were befouled and then burned to indicate Antiochus' contempt for the law that, in his opinion, taught hatred of the

human race. This was the first time the Torah was baptised in fire. The statue of Zeus, "the abomination of devastation," was then placed upon the altar in whose honor the sacrifices were to be brought henceforth (17th of Tammuz—July, 168 B. C. E.). The temple of Jerusalem, the only shrine upon the face of the earth dedicated to holiness, was thoroughly defiled. The God of Israel was, to all appearances, dislodged by Zeus Hellenios.

Two psalms of lament, composed by contemporary Levitical singers (Psalms 44 and 74), portray the deep grief of the faithful over this wretchedness and defilement:

"All the day is my disgrace before me, and the shame of my face covereth me; because of the voice of him that reproached and blasphemeth, by reason of the enemy and him that seeketh vengeance. . . . But for thy sake are we slain all the day; we were counted as flocks destined for slaughter. Awake, wherefore wilt thou sleep, O Lord. . . . Wherefore wilt thou hide thy face?" " . . . For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. O remember not against us the iniquities of our fathers. . . . Help us, O God of our salvation, because of the glory of thy name; and deliver us and atone for our sins for the sake of thy name. Wherefore shall the nations say, Where is their God? . . ." (Psalms XLIV, 16-17, 23, 24a, 25a; LXXIV, 7, 8b, 9, 10.)

This desperate attempt to denationalize the Judaean people and to tear them away from their God put Israel to a severe, fateful test. But Israel stood this test triumphantly, and sealed his covenant with his God and His laws with the blood of martyrdom. The Judaeans who were scattered in Syrian and Phoenician cities, living in close proximity to the Greeks, and who were included in the

decree, yielded, in their helplessness, in appearance, offered sacrifice to Greek gods, and denied their faith or practised it in secret. But even among these there were the faithful who testified with their lives to the verity of their Laws. Even in Antioch, under the very eyes of the monster Antiochus, the aged Eleazar went bravely to his death because he refused to partake of the meat of an idolatrous sacrifice. Among the Syrian Judaeans it was told of a Judaean mother of seven sons, who heroically met a martyr's death together with all her sons, including the youngest who was a mere child. The death of these martyrs, at the extreme stages of life, the one in hoary age, the other in the tenderest youth, was an ennobling example for the Judaeans scattered among the Greeks. In Judaea itself innocent blood was shed day by day. The officials, appointed by Antiochus to carry his decree into execution, turned their attention to the country towns whither the inhabitants of Jerusalem had fled, erected altars there upon their arrival, and called upon the population in the name of the king to offer swine to Zeus, and to partake of its meat, or to defile the Sabbath by labor if they happened to arrive on a Sabbath. On the occasion of the Dionysian festival, they compelled the people to participate in the festivities in the Greek fashion. The greater part of the population fled to the mountains, hid themselves in caves and hollows, or sought refuge in the dreary regions of the Dead Sea. This resistance to his commands infuriated Antiochus still more, and he ordered his officials to take the most drastic measures against the non-conformists. The officials redoubled their persecutions. The scrolls of the law that fell into their hand were burned, and anyone caught in the act of reading such a scroll was put to death. All

Eleazar's Death

By Doré

synagogs and school-houses were destroyed. Women after delivery who circumcised newly born sons in the absence of the men, were hanged upon the walls of the houses together with their children!

All these cruelties, however, instead of frightening the people into yielding to Antiochus, rendered them more firm in their resistance. Death had lost its terror to them. Many preferred death to tasting forbidden food. This steadfastness was inspired by the zealous Assideans, some of whom left their hiding places by secret by-paths and went from town to town, village to village, calling upon the people in fiery exhortations to remain loyal and steadfast to the God of their fathers. These passionate addresses exerted a tremendous influence, especially so since many of these preachers themselves set the example of martyrdom for their convictions.

The Syrian officials of Jerusalem soon learned of the activity of the Assideans, and discovered their hiding place probably through some villainous Hellenist. Philippus, the Phrygian commander of the Jerusalem garrison, set out with his man to locate those places of refuge. On a Sabbath day, he ordered his soldiers to surround the caves where a thousand men, women and children were hiding; commanded the latter to step forth, and promised to spare their lives if they submitted to the decree of the king. The Assideans answered unanimously: "We shall not come forth; we shall not obey the king and desecrate the Sabbath." Thereupon Philippus ordered his soldiers to make an attack upon the caves. The Assideans made no defense, and even made no attempt to raise stones with which to stop up the opening of the cave, regarding such a labor as a desecration of the Sabbath, but looked on with firm hearts, and called heaven

and earth to witness that they were being delivered over to death innocently. All the men, women and children thus perished in the caves through the brands of fire thrown by Philippus' soldiers in the openings and crevices, and through suffocation by the smoke.

The horrible death of these martyrs created deep sorrow and grief in the hearts of the faithful Judaeans. Even the most courageous lost heart. What was to be the result of these deplorable conditions? Especially discouraging for the faithful were the circumstances that no sign from heaven was visible that would inspire hope; that no prophet appeared to predict how long these evil days were to continue.

CHAPTER VI

THE MACCABEAN REVOLT (167-160 B. C. E.)

When the bloody persecutions had reached such a stage that there seemed to be no possible escape either from total annihilation or from submission to the inevitable through exhaustion and despair, a revolt broke out, led by the Asmonean or Maccabean family. The members of this family whose heroic efforts were destined to strengthen Judaism for all time to come, combined sincere piety and a spirit of self-sacrifice with courage, sagacity and prudence. The family consisted of the aged father, Mattathias, son of Johanan, son of Simon Asmoneus, a priest whose residence was in Jerusalem, but who had taken up his abode in the little town of Modin (about thirteen miles north of Jerusalem), in consequence of the defilement of the temple; and of his five sons, each of whom bears an Aramaic surname: Johanan Gaddis, Simon Tharsi, Judas Maccabeus,* Eleazar Avaran, and Jonathan Apphus. This Asmonean family was filled with the deepest consternation at the deplorable condition of Judaea, and Mattathias resolved

* Some scholars derive the name from *Makabeth,* Hammer, a characterization of Judas on account of his strentgth. Others maintain that Maccabee is an abbreviation of מי כמכה באלם יהוה the motto inscribed on Judas' banner. Most scholars agree that Judas was thus named after the town where he lived.—Rab.

to remain inactive no longer brooding over his nation's sorrows in some hiding place, but to rise manfully, and either to deliver his people or to die gloriously for the cause of God. When a Syrian official, Apelles, arrived at Modin to demand that its inhabitants worship the Greek idols, Mattathias and his sons and their followers made it their business to be present; and when Mattathias, as the leading citizen, was called upon by Apelles to set the example of obedience to the king's decree, he replied: "Even if all the nations in the kingdom of the king should fall away from the faith of their fathers, I, my sons, and my brothers will remain true to the covenant of our fathers." But when a Judaean approached the altar to offer to Zeus, Mattathias could contain himself no longer, his zeal burned within him, and he fell upon the renegade and killed him near the altar. His sons, provided with long knives, overpowered Apelles and his band, and destroyed the altar. This act proved to be a turning point. It was a signal for the people to awaken from the inactivity of despair, and to take up the struggle.

Mattathias immediately raised the standard of rebellion: "Whosoever is zealous of the Law and the covenant let him follow me." The people of Modin and of the neighborhood followed him at once, and he withdrew to a safe retreat in the mountains of Ephraim. Here he was joined by the remnant of the Assideans who escaped death in the caves, and by others who had to flee on account of the persecutions. The number of the determined defenders of the fatherland and of the Law grew day by day, and Mattathias exhorted them to disregard their own lives, and to prepare themselves for the severe struggles that were impending. Warned by the result of the excessive piety of the Assideans who refused even to raise

a stone on the Sabbath in self-defense, the patriots, gathered about Mattathias, resolved to defend themselves, henceforth, even on a Sabbath if an attack was made upon them. The Assideans, men of peace, hitherto accustomed to occupy themselves with the study of the sacred scriptures, began to practice the rough pursuit of war. A leader who inspired confidence created warriors. Otherwise, the hopeless condition prevailing at the close of the period of the Judges repeated itself. The country was under subjection just as it was at the beginning of the time of Saul. The inhabitants were hiding in hollows and caves; a portion of them was on the side of the enemy, while only a handful was prepared to give its life in defense of its country, and that handful was inexperienced in the arts of war, and was weaponless. Victory seemed more hopeless under the present conditions than it did then.

Mattathias took care to avoid an open battle with the Syrians. Acquainted as he was with every nook and corner of the country, he and his men made unexpected entries into towns and villages, destroyed the altars erected to the Greek idols, chastised those inhabitants who sympathized with the enemy, attacked the Hellenists whenever they came upon them, and performed the rite of circumcision upon those children from whom it was withheld owing to the persecutions of Antiochus. If he came across a small Syrian troop, Mattathias attacked and destroyed it; but whenever the commander of the Jerusalem garrison sent a strong force to pursue the rebels, they scattered and could nowhere be found. Mattathias, in short, conducted such a guerilla warfare as is possible only in a mountainous country, and which ultimately wears out even a powerful opponent.

When Mattathias was about to die (167 B. C.

E.), he designated his older son Simon as adviser, and the younger, Judas, as commander of the band; and charging his followers to yield their lives for the covenant of their fathers, and to fight the battle of the Lord—a message which, under such conditions, and at such an hour, could not but make a deep impression—he was gathered to his fathers. With the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the resistance to Antiochus took a still more favorable turn. Judas was a heroic warrior, such as did not appear in Israel since the days of David and Joab, only purer and nobler than those. An invisible power seemed to emanate from his heroic soul that inspired with death-defying courage all who came in contact with him. At the same time he was endowed with the military genius to choose the right time for an attack, to take advantage of the enemy's weakness, and to confound him by means of sham attacks. On the one side he possessed dove-like tenderness and simple-heartedness, and, on the other side, he resembled a lion in its rage! He was as devout as any of the best men of Israel's past. He relied not on his sword, but on the help of God whom he invoked before going into battle. Judas Maccabeus was a truly Israelitish hero who resorted to the shedding of blood only in order to restore the lost liberty of his people, and to raise them from their humiliation. So deep was the impression that the personality of Judas Maccabeus made upon his generation that he gave his name to that epoch-making period.

At first, Judas followed his father's example; moved secretly, or at night, chastised the renegades, drew the faltering to himself, and inflicted injury upon small bodies of Syrian troops. But when the number of his followers kept on increasing by the addition of those who had hitherto submitted to force out of love of peace, as well as of

MATTATHIAS KILLING THE MAN SACRIFICING TO THE GREEK IDOLS

By Doré

those whom the prevailing cruelty and wretchedness had cured from their infatuation for things Greek, Judas dared to venture a battle with a Syrian force under the command of Apollonius. In the first open battle which he fought Judas was victorious (166 B. C. E.). The commander Apollonius was killed and his soldiers fell on the battle field or fled. Small as the Syrian force may have been, this victory inspired the Judaean patriots with confidence. For the first time they met the enemy face to face, and their courage remained unshaken! This they regarded as a sign that God had not forsaken His people, but had come to their rescue. Judas took possession of Apollonius' sword, and used it as his weapon in the succeeding battles until his dying day.

To avenge the death of Apollonius, the Syrian commander Horon, at the head of a large army, determined to overwhelm Judas and his band by superior numbers in the mountains whither he was guided by traitorous Hellenists. When the patriots first beheld the great number of the enemy near Beth-horon, they were greatly discouraged. But Judas calmed their fears, reminded them that they were fighting in defense of their lives, of their children and of their Law, and led them to battle with such impetuosity that the Syrians left eight hundred dead on the battle field and the rest fled westwards towards Philistia. This first decisive victory that Judas won at Beth-horon over a superior force, inspired the Judaeans with confidence in the ultimate success of their cause, and filled the neighboring nations with fear at the skill, sagacity, and heroism of the Maccabeans and at the tenacity of the Judaean people.

Antiochus paid little attention to the Judaeans at first, in his hallucination that his decrees were sufficient to render the people of Judaea submis-

sive and obedient to his policy of conversion. But when he learned of the mishaps that had befallen his troops, and of the heroic conduct of Judas, he began to realize that he had underestimated the power of resistance of Judaea, and he conceived the scheme of annihilating the rebellious Judaeans once for all. This scheme, however, could not be carried into execution at once. Not having enough native troops he would have to hire mercenaries; that, however, demanded money, whereas his treasury was exhausted. His extravagant expenditures far exceeded his income. Owing to the open warfare in Judaea, the taxes remained uncollected. To this, other embarrassments were added. Tidings from the east and the north frightened him. Arsaces, his satrap of Parthia, broke away from the Syro-Babylonian kingdom, and made himself and his people independent. Artaxias, king of Armenia, likewise paid little attention to his liege-lord, and acted like an independent prince. The people of Aradus and of other Phoenician cities also refused obedience. As a result, his income dwindled still further. To refill the coffers of his treasury he would first have to reduce his rebellious subjects to subjection; to carry on such a war he needed money. Antiochus was thus embarrassed on all sides.

However, the half-crazy Antiochus managed to obtain enough money with which to hire mercenaries for a year. Half of these hired troops he was to lead in person against the rebellious countries on the other side of the Euphrates, and the other half he placed in charge of Lysias, a man of royal blood, whom he appointed viceroy, and to whom he entrusted the rearing of his young son. His policy with reference to Judaea he changed completely. The Judaeans had rejected with scorn his well-meaning intentions to raise them to a posi-

tion of respect by means of Hellenization, and even dared to take up arms against him. They thus proved themselves incorrigible, and unworthy of his intended benefaction. They must, therefore, be entirely and completely annihilated. Lysias, accordingly, received the order to march with his mercenaries upon Judaea, and, upon its conquest, to remove every trace of Israel and Jerusalem, to erase their very memory from the land, and to transplant foreign peoples upon the site of Judaea. The Judaean Hellenists were to be included in this scheme of annihilation; Antiochus gave them up. Of what good was the handful that yielded slavish obedience to his decrees or even promoted his plans?

This openly avowed scheme spread terror and despair among the Judaeans, particularly among those who were scattered among other nationalities outside of Judaea. Would the small Maccabean band be able to withstand the shock of a mighty army, provided with elephants in addition? In every country and in every city where the command of the king became known, the Judaeans clothed themselves in sackcloth and ashes, amidst wailing, weeping and fasting. But this scheme of annihilating an entire people, because of its very unheard of atrocity, furnished the army of the patriots with new defenders. The indifferent and the worldly, and even those sympathizers with the innovations who had not strayed too far from Judaism, joined the Macceabean force. They had no other choice.

To strengthen their spirit of resistance, and to encourage the patriots in their efforts to save the threatened legacy of the fathers, two books were composed and circulated among the Judaeans: The books of Daniel and of Esther. Each book originated in a different circle, and addressed itself

to a different class. For this reason they vary in context, style and language to such an extent that the close relationship between them is not recognizable. The Book of Daniel had its origin among the Assideans, and addressed itself to those who were convinced of the miraculous intervention of God in the fate of the people of Israel, and who would fain look forward to a miracle that would avert the threatened destruction. But the fact that no prophet appeared to announce the purpose and to foretell the duration of the present wretched conditions, created a doubt in the minds of the most pious and faithful as to whether God would continue to show His mercy to His people. The Book of Daniel sought to calm this anxiety, and to indicate that prophecy was not yet wholly vanished from the midst of Israel, but that "there is still a prophecy for the time."

In the beginning of the book the example is cited of the youths (Daniel, Ananias, Mishael, and Azariah) living at the Chaldean and Persian courts and accustomed to foreign customs, who remained steadfast and loyal to the institutions of Judaism in the midst of great danger, and who were also miraculously saved from the death that threatened them. The rest of the book is devoted to prophetic revelations, and foretells the final humiliation of the king who arrogantly raised his hand against the sanctuary, and who sought to force the people of Judaea to forsake the God of their fathers.

Iu the firm conviction that a kingdom based upon idolatry and force could not endure, the Book of Daniel, in manifold visions, partly concealed and partly revealed (apocalyptic), announced the certain fall of the impious Syrian empire, the heir of former empires. The fourth empire upon earth, succeeding the empires of the Babylonians, of the Medo-Persians, and of the Macedonians under

Alexander the Great, "shall speak blasphemous words against the Most High, and shall endeavor to annihilate the holy men, and to abolish the festivals and the Laws. The holy men shall be given into his hands for a time, two times, and half a time (three and a half years). . . . Then will the kingdom, the dominions, and the greatness be given unto the people of the holy ones of the Most High for all eternity, and all rulers shall bow down before them and obey them" (Dan. 7:25-28). In another vision the Syrian kingdom of Antiochus is spoken of as a little horn compared with the empire of his predecessors: "And the little horn waxed exceedingly great towards the south, and the east, and the north; and raised itself to the hosts of heaven, and cast down stars and trampled upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even above the Lord of the starry hosts; and the daily sacrifice was abolished by him; and in the stead of the sanctuary he placed the abomination of desolation (his idol). . . ." (Ib. 8:9-12). To the question: "How long will it continue, this vision of the abolished daily sacrifice, of the abomination of desolation, and of the trampling upon the sanctuary and the people?" (Ib. 8:13), a voice replied: "Unto twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings (that is 1150 days); then shall the sanctuary be justified" (Ib. 8:14). "And in the troublous times, after seventy-two weeks of years (72x7 years) the anointed one shall be cut off . . . a bold blasphemer shall destroy the city and the sanctuary . . . a week of years (seven years) and a half week of years (three and a half years) shall he cause the sacrifices and the ablutions to cease, and on the altar he shall place the abomination of desolation, until the determined destruction shall come upon the destroyer" (Ib. 9:25-27).

The Book of Daniel thus speaking in mysterious

allusions was undoubtedly read in Assidean circles with great interest. The introduction of angelic apparitions and of prodigies, and, in addition, its apocalyptic form on account of which each episode demanded an interpretation, and each interpretation in turn reflected the present, rendered the book all the more fascinating. Its language, half Hebrew and half Aramic, deepened the effect. Moroever, it solved the problem as to the meaning and purpose of the atrocious persecutions: to destroy sin on the one side, and to purify the faithful on the other. The period of oppression, having a mysterious significance, was predetermined from the beginning. Temporal empires will rise and fall. At the end of that period the kingdom of God, as the "kingdom of the holy ones," will begin. The sleeping martyrs will awake to life everlasting. Thus, there was still "a prophecy for the time," even though there was no prophet.

The Book of Esther treats the events of the time from an altogether different point of view. Its context contained nothing mystic, and is, on the contrary, so matter-of-fact that God is not at all drawn into the warp and woof of events. The name of God is not mentioned even once, as though the author desired that the divine guidance of human affairs should be merely surmised, and as though he feared that the introduction of supernatural elements in his narration would repel rather than attract the circle of readers to which his book was addressed. It was written for the worldly-wise who no longer believed in miracles, and was to cast a ray of hope upon the hopeless present by analagous events from the past. It already happened in former times that a Persian king, Ahasverus, issued a decree to the effect that all Judaeans of his kingdom be annihilated, but, by a chain of naturally consecutive circumstances,

the threatened danger was obviated and the grief of the Judaeans was changed into joy. Ahasverus, who had rejected his wife because she had refused obedience to one of his caprices, raised to the queenship the Judaean Esther or Hadassah, the most beautiful of all the beautiful virgins of his empire who were conducted to him, and amongst whom he was to choose his queen. Mordecai, her uncle and guardian who kept himself near the palace on her account, informed the king, through Esther, of a conspiracy against his life, without receiving any reward from the thoughtless Ahasuerus. Soon after, Mordecai found himself in great danger because he had refused to pay divine honors, and to kneel before Haman, a favorite of the king. Enraged at Mordecai, Haman included in his hatred all the Judaeans, and obtained the permission of the king to annihilate all the men, women and children of that race on a certain day. Despair seized all the Judaeans; wailing, weeping, fasting and grief prevailed within their habitations all through the empire. How was the threatened calamity to be averted, determined upon as it was by a heartless favorite, prompted by a sense of insulted dignity and by a spirit of vengeance, and approved and sealed by a capricious king? All of a sudden a miraculous change took place that, however, was no miracle. One sleepless night on the part of the king brought about the humiliation of Haman, and the elevation of Mordecai whom the arch-enemy of the Judaeans was forced to lead in triumph through the streets of Susa. The courage and the beauty of Queen Esther completed this change. The king recalled his decree of annihilation against the Judaeans, and granted them the permission to defend themselves against their enemies. Their sorrow was thus turned into joy. Thus, the object of this book written in a dramatic strain and in a

symmetrical, fine style, was to point to the worldly minded that a favorable turn of affairs might take place, even without miraculous occurrences.

The peril hanging over the Judaeans was, meanwhile, drawing nearer. After Antiochus departed on his eastern expedition with part of his army, his viceroy Lysias, appointed as commander-in-chief that Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes, who, on a former occasion, had defended Menelaus, and who was the commander of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. His lieutenants were Nicanor, son of Patrocles, and Gorgias. The latter received the order to take the field against the Judaean patriots; and he led his army, estimated at forty thousand including cavalry, but probably exaggerated, along the plain of the Mediterranean into the heart of Judaea. Samaritans and Philistines, the arch-enemies of the Judaeans, placed themselves at his disposal. Gorgias was so sure of victory that he invited slave dealers to accompany his army, and to be prepared with money and with chains to take possession of the captive Judaeans. The Syrian commander apparently thought it more advisable to sell than to slay the Judaeans. But while their bodies were being bargained for, the Judaean warriors, whose number had grown to six thousand, gathered about Judas. Before leading them into battle, their commander thought it advisable to inspire them with heroic courage. For this purpose he called a solemn assembly in the mountain city of Mizpah, in the very place where, nine hundred years before, Samuel had called a similar assembly, under similar conditions, to select a leader against the enemy that was planning the destruction of Israel. Judas chose Mizpah as the place of prayer because, under Gedaliah, after the destruction of the temple, that city became the center of worship for the remnant of the Judaeans, and still had a small temple. A

multitude of people from the neighboring towns assembled to participate in the solemn day of prayer. Fasting the entire day, and in mourners' garb, the people offered fervent prayers to God for help and mercy. Selections from the Torah were read out of the scrolls which the Maccabean army always carried in its midst, and Judas, on his part, sought to inspire his army with courage, and made energetic preparations for the impending struggle. He divided his army into four divisions, each under the command of one of his brothers. In accordance with the prescription of the law, he had it announced in the army that whosoever had been newly married, or had built a new house, or had planted a new vineyard, or who lacked courage, was at liberty to withdraw from the army. Thereupon he proceeded to meet the enemy at Emmaus, a few hours distance from Mizpah.

Gorgias with about five thousand infantry and a thousand cavalry pitched his camp in the plain near Emmaus, because from that place it seemed easier to penetrate the mountains of Judaea, and to attack the rendezvous of the Maccabean army. Gorgias intended to surprise the Judaeans at night, but Judas outwitted him. Under cover of darkness Judas broke camp, turned westward through familiar by-paths, and stood in the rear of the enemy. When Gorgias found the Judaean camp empty, he took it for granted that Judas had withdrawn into the mountains out of fear, and hurried after him. This was the object of Judas' stratagem. He followed the Syrians in the rear, reached their camp and set fire to it, and continued in the tracks of the troops. When, at the break of day, Gorgias realized that the enemy he was seeking in the mountains was in his rear, he had no time to concentrate his scattered divisions, but could issue a hurried order to only one division to halt and to

throw itself in the path of the Judaeans. Maccabeus had, meanwhile, arranged his forces in order of battle, and fired them with zeal for the approaching fight; his younger brother read hurriedly a few encouraging verses from the Torah, and with the battle cry "Salvation is the Lord's," the patriots threw themselves upon the Syrians with such impetuosity that the enemy fled on all sides. Judas warned his men not to fall upon the booty but to hold themselves in readiness to meet the other divisions of Gorgias' army on their return from the mountains. The returning troops soon came in view, and the Judaeans prepared to give them battle. But the battle was never fought. As soon as the Syrians saw the smoke ascending from their former camp, they took to their heels and fled southward to Philistia. "There was great salvation on that day." As a matter of fact, the victory of Emmaus (166 B. C. E.), brought about by clever stratagem and heroic valor, proved to be of far-reaching consequence. It crippled the enemy, and inspired the Judaeans with self-confidence. Neither cavalry, nor infantry covered with helmets and shields could frighten the patriots any longer. The fleeing enemy furnished the Judaeans with a large supply of weapons of which there was a scarcity at the beginning of the war. The considerable booty they captured, gold, silver, purple, and the purses of the many slave dealers who followed the enemy's camp, supplied Judas with the means necessary for the further pursuit of the struggle. With songs of thanksgiving and praise, ending in the refrain: "O sing unto the Lord, for He is good, for His kindness endureth forever," the victors returned to their rendezvous at Modin.

Realizing that Lysias would make redoubled efforts to avenge the defeat of his general, the Judaeans remaind in camp, ready for battle. To

their great joy, their army constantly increased in numbers until it grew to ten thousand men. If there ever was a holy war, that conducted by the Maccabeans undoubtedly deserves that designation. When, in the following year (autumn 165 B. C. E.), Lysias in person led a large army against Judaea, he found the patriots more courageous and determined to defend themselves. He pitched his camp at Beth-zur, about fifteen miles south of Jerusalem. Judas and his ten thousand went to meet him. A pitched battle ensued, and the violent attack of the Judaeans won again over the skill of the Syrian mercenaries. Lysias retired dejectedly, though he flattered himself that, by increasing his army, he would still become the master of Judaea. Judaea was thus completely cleared of the enemy. Only in the Acra of Jerusalem, Menelaus with his incorrigible Hellenists, and possibly also a small garrison, still maintained themselves.

The two decisive victories of Emmaus and Beth-zur changed the situation completely. The threatened danger was averted. Nearly three and a half years (from Tammuz—June 168, to Marhesvan—October 165, half a week of years) have passed since the persecutions began and the temple was defiled, just as the book of Daniel had foretold, and quiet was restored again. Maccabeus and his followers determined to take advantage of this favorable opportunity to enter Jerusalem, and to put an end to the desecration prevailing there. The sight of the holy city had a crushing effect upon her faithful sons who had exposed their lives in defense of her honor. The city was like a wilderness, the temple was deserted, its gates burned, its halls ruined; idolatrous altars abounded, and on the sacred altar there stood the image of Zeus and the statue of the hated Antiochus. The pa-

triots, however, had no time to indulge in sorrow over the ruined temple; they had to act quickly before they might be interfered with in the work of purification. They destroyed the image of Zeus, removed the stones and other impure things from the courts, and put aside the defiled altar. A new altar was erected, new gates were made, and new vessels were provided for the temple. All these preparations were completed in three weeks, and early on the morning of the twenty-fifth of Kislev (November 165 B. C. E.), the temple was consecrated with sacrifices and prayers, and with a whole-souled devotion exceeding that of the two former consecrations. The depression and the terror of the preceding three and a half years gave way to feelings of joy and of hope.

The consecration of the temple marked the victory of Judaism over the refined Hellenic idolatry, of the God of Israel over the idols. The feast of dedication continued for eight days, and was solemnized by the Levitical choirs with psalms of thanksgiving and praise. The people from all the cities of Judaea participated in the solemnities; and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, it seems, illuminated their homes with lights as a symbol for the Torah which the poets referred to as "light." The Asmonean brothers, in conjunction with the remaining members of the Great Assembly, decreed that the eight days following the twenty-fifth of Kislev be kept as a joyous festival in memory of the consecration of the temple. The members of the House of Israel were to recall to mind, year by year, the victory of the few over the many, and the rededication of the temple. This decree was carried out conscientiously. Since that time, for two thousand years, these days are celebrated in every Jewish home as "days of dedication" (Chanukah)

by the kindling of lights. Because of that circumstance, these eight days are called the "Festival of Lights."

As a matter of course, the old order of service in the temple was restored, and priests and Levites officiated again. Only those priests who had participated in Greek idolatry were excluded from the temple and from any position of honor connected with it. But this just punishment gave rise to untoward consequences. The priests of the Hellenist party, finding reconciliation impossible with the representatives of the people, became still more embittered, and redoubled their animosity against the nationalistic party. While the purification of the temple was in progress, Judas ordered his soldiers to keep watch so as not to be disturbed by the Hellenists, and when the consecration was over, he surrounded the temple mount with a high wall, and fortified it with strong and high towers, and stationed a garrison there to guard it against attack. In anticipation of the many struggles that were awaiting the people before they could secure their freedom, Judas provided for the protection and for the defense of the country also. He fortified the city of Beth-zur whence Lysias had intended to penetrate into Judaea. This fortress was intended especially as a protection against the Idumeans.

The victory of the Judaean patriots over the Syrians rekindled the ancient animosity of the neighboring peoples against the Judaeans, and they mistreated with the utmost cruelty the Judaeans who had settled or sought safety among them. The Philistines in the southwest, the Phoenicians in the northwest, the Ammonites east of the Jordan, and the Syrians and the Macedonians throughout the neighborhood, were all alike possessed by a spirit of animosity towards the Judaeans. The Idu-

means, in the south, seemed to have been as bitter against the Judeans in the days of Antiochus as they were in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; lay in wait for Judaean fugitives, and mistreated and murdered many of them. It was, therefore, of the greatest importance to render them harmless. As the Idumean territory was not far from Judaea, Judas led an expedition against the Idumeans first, captured their stronghold Acrabattina, overpowered them, and drove them from their homes. He then proceeded to cross the Jordan, and chastised the Ammonites who were under the command of Timotheus, a native or Syrian general, and a stubborn and persistent enemy of the Judaeans. Judas thus provided security for the Judaeans who had settled in that region, and inspired the peoples with respect for the Judaean name.

No sooner did the Judaean army return to Jerusalem than messengers arrived with new reports of the mistreatment of Judaeans. The representatives of Gilead and Bashan complained that their heathen neighbors were gathering to annihilate them, and reported that at Tobiene a thousand Judaean men were killed, and their wives and children were taken into captivity. Soon after, messengers, in torn garments, arrived with letters from the Judaeans of Galilee, reporting that the Greeks of Acco (Ptolemais), Tyre and Sidon were threatening them with death. As in former times the Israelites had turned to Saul in their distress, the Judaeans now turned to Judas Maccabeus; but, unlike Saul, Judas did not have to send messengers to the tribes and use threats in order to induce his army to hasten to the relief of Jabesh-Gilead. All the men who were capable of bearing arms were at his call, and followed him willingly and joyously.

Judas divided his army, placed one division in charge of his brother Simon to relieve the Judaeans of Galilee, while he and his brother Jonathan proceeded across the Jordan to Gilead (Peraea), and entrusted the rest of his warriors to two lieutenants who were to protect the western border of Judaea against the Philistines. Simon accomplished his mission speedily and successfully. His courageous and experienced soldiers defeated the hostile bands they met, and scattered and pursued them to the very walls of the Acco. This achievement spared them further struggles, for the Macedonians of other cities did not dare oppose them. Simon, therefore, proceeded undisturbed to all the cities of Galilee and Arbela, gathered the Judaeans who had settled there, and escorted them, with their families and possessions, to Judaea, where they were to take up their homes in the future. Judas Maccabeus, on the other hand, had a more difficult task before him in the region of Peraea which contained strong fortresses on mountain heights that had to be taken by storm. On his way he met again the implacable enemy of the Judaeans, the general Timotheus whom he had once defeated. But Judas captured several fortresses, razed their walls, slew their inhabitants, relieved the Judaeans who were shut up in the fortress of Dathema, gathered all the Judaeans of Gilead, and led them across the Jordan where they were to establish their homes henceforth. Shortly before the Feast of Weeks he returned with the multitude of the Judaeans of Gilead to Jerusalem (May 164 B. C. E.). From all the cities of Judaea the people flocked to welcome the victors, and to celebrate the festival in joy and gratitude. Hymns of jubilation rang out from the temple:

"I called upon the Lord in my distress;
He answered me and set me in a wide place,
The Lord is with me I shall not fear,
What can man do unto me?"
(Ps. 118:5-6.)

Immediately upon the conclusion of the festival, Judas and his men departed to engage in a conflict with Gorgias, the once defeated Syrian general. During his absence, and contrary to orders, the two lieutenants whom Judas charged with watching the borders, attacked Gorgias with his Syrian army then stationed in Jamnia, suffered a defeat, and were driven back to the mountains of Judah. Judas forced Gorgias to fall back, and destroyed several cities along the coast of the Mediterranean together with their temples and idols.

While Judas Maccabeus was thus engaged in chastising the enemies of his people in the neighborhood of Judea, Lysias, the virtual ruler of Syria, remained apparently indifferent. Possibly he lacked the money necessary to hire fresh mercenary troops; he may have regarded the Judaeans as invincible; or he may have been influenced by Ptolemy Makron, a man who stood high in the Syrian court, who defended the Judaeans, and maintained that there was no justification for the persecutions to which they were subjected. All of a sudden, significant news came from Asia with regard to Antiochus Epiphanes. After again reducing to subjection the rebellious governor of Armenia, Artaxias, he proceeded to Parthia, where he failed in his efforts at conquest, and had to return empty-handed. Hard pressed for money, he attempted to rob the temple of Anaitis in the city of Susa, in Elymais, but was so savagely attacked by the outraged worshippers of the goddess, that he was compelled to withdraw, fell seriously sick,

and died in a fit of insanity (December 164 B. C. E.). His last decree was as insane as his entire career; for he appointed his confidant Philippus as regent and guardian of his young son Antiochus V. Eupator, although he had previously entrusted unlimited power to Lysias. Antiochus, by his last act, gave rise to dissensions and civil war, and thus contributed to the downfall of the Syrian kingdom. The prophecy of the Book of Daniel, that the "little horn," the blasphemous Antiochus, "would be broken without the hand of man" was fulfilled. The defeat of the Syrian armies at the hands of the Maccabean heroes, and the death of Antiochus under strange circumstances heralded the beginning of the end of the Syro-Macedonian kingdom, the "fourth kingdom" of the Book of Daniel. As a result of the death of Antiochus, Lysias, who was the commander-in-chief, as well as the actual guardian of the young king, became still more paralyzed for fear of the arrival of the other regent and guardian. He, therefore, remained inactive for some time.

But though Judaea was in no danger of an attack from without, for the time being, at least, there was a dangerous enemy lurking within Jerusalem, that had to be reckoned with. The Hellenists, with the pretender Menelaus, still occupied the Acra, and persisted in acts of hostility against the nationalists and against the Sanctuary. Judas had surrounded the temple with a high wall, provided it with towers, and thus rendered their attacks on the temple futile. But how long was this warfare between two contiguous camps to continue? Judas determined to put an end to it. He laid siege to the Acra, built ramparts, and erected catapults to hurl heavy stones against its walls. A few Hellenists, however, succeeded in escaping from the Acra, hastened to the young King Anti-

ochus Eupator, laid their grievances before him, and pleaded for help. They represented to Eupator or to his guardian, that should the Acra, too, fall into the hands of the Maccabeans, the rebels would be invincible. Thereupon the Syrian court decided to take energetic measures against the rebellious Judaeans. The advice of friendly mediation given by Ptolemy Makron was ignored, and the flames of war blazed forth again (spring, 162 B. C. E.). The time was particularly unfavorable to the Judaeans, because it was the Sabbatical year when the fields lay fallow. The patriots, who risked their lives in defense of the Law, observed the Sabbatical year most scrupulously, and nothing was sown or harvested in that year. The population of Judaea had, therefore, to satisfy itself with fruits, with the small after-growths, or with whatever was left from the products of the previous years. The fortresses containing garrisons could not be supplied with provisions.

Lysias, accompanied by the youthful Eupator, proceeded against Judaea from the south with a large army and with elephants. As Maccabeus had to leave garrisons to defend the fortress, the temple, and Beth-zur, he could take the field against Lysias with only a few thousand men. The garrison of Beth-zur, which was to hold the enemy back as long as possible, fought valiantly, and made sallies in an effort to destroy the engines of the enemy. The defenders of Beth-zur, however, were not in a position to withstand a long siege, because they were short of provisions; and the secret paths by which supplies were furnished to them, occasionally were betrayed to the enemy, it is said, by a traitor from their own ranks named Rodokos. Driven by famine, the garrison agreed to surrender the fortress on condition of free withdrawal. The Syrians thereupon moved upon Jerusalem, but were

intercepted by Judas. A battle ensued at Bet-Zechariah, not far from Beth-zur. The Judaeans performed great feats of valor. Eleazar Avaran, one of Judas' brothers, crawled underneath the body of an elephant and stabbed it, in the belief that its richly attired rider was the king himself, and was crushed to death by the falling animal. But the superior number of the Syrians won the day, and Judas retired to Jerusalem and intrenched himself in the fortress of the temple. Lysias followed, and besieged the temple. Judas offered a stout resistance. However, with the continuance of the siege, the food supply gave out, and many of his soldiers left the temple by means of subterranean passages and scattered through the country. Judas, his three brothers, and a handful of their followers alone remained. Jerusalem, or rather its last refuge, the temple, was about to fall, as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, for want of food and perhaps to be destroyed again, when it was saved by an unexpected occurrence.

While Lysias was engaged in Judaea, Philippus, who had been appointed by the insane and dying Antiochus as regent and guardian of his son, was gathering an army in Media and Persia, and marched upon Antioch to displace Lysias. When the news reached his camp, Lysias, realizing the necessity of raising the siege, and of leading the besieging army against his enemy, persuaded Eupator to make peace with the Judaeans, and a treaty of peace was concluded, the main stipulations being that the Judaeans be granted unlimited religious liberty and that the fortress of the temple be spared. The king and his guardian gave their solemn pledge to abide by the treaty, and the gates of the outer temple courts were opened to admit them. But once within, they treacherously ordered their soldiers to destroy the walls and the towers of the

fortress. However, they did no further damage, and committed no desecrations, for Lysias was in haste to meet Philippus, who had, meanwhile, taken possession of Antioch. The numerous struggles of the Asmoneans were thus crowned with success. Religious liberty was guaranteed; Judaeans were no longer forced to sacrifice to Zeus. Moreover, the Syrian court withdrew its protection from the Hellenists, who had to leave the Acra. The mischief maker, Menelaus, the cause of untold miseries, was executed at Boroea (Aleppo) by order of Lysias, after disgracing the high priesthood for ten years.

Inasmuch as the return of peace also restored the old order of things, and a new high priest had, of necessity, to be appointed, the people could think of no one more worthy of the holy office and of heading the state than Judas Maccabeus. Judas accepted the office without violating the order of high priestly succession, since the son of the legitimate high priest, Onias III was living in Egypt, and, in the absence of such a legitimate successor, the traditional law authorized a priest anointed for the prosecution of a war to fill the holy office. With the return of peace the people of Judaea were able to resume their normal occupations, and the bloody wounds of the commonwealth began to close and to heal. But this tranquillity was not to be of long duration. The recent disturbance could not be so quickly forgotten. There were still open and secret Hellenists who hated Judas Maccabeus and his followers; and they took advantage of a political upheaval to begin the struggle all over again.

Prince Demetrius, whom Antiochus Epiphanes had robbed of the succession to the throne, and who was kept in Rome as a hostage, took advantage of a favorable opportunity to leave Rome and succeeded in removing Eupator and Lysias out of

the way and in placing himself upon the throne of Syria. The Judaean malcontents, under the leadership of the priest Jakim, or Alcimus, utilized this sudden change to lay their complaints before the new king against Judas Maccabeus and his followers. It is not known whether Alcimus belonged to the extreme or to the moderate Hellenists, though he seems to have been a nephew of the great teacher Josè, son of Joezer. Alcimus was embittered because he had been excluded from the altar and from the temple on account of his misdeeds, and he determined to have his revenge. Accordingly, he and his friends betook themselves to Demetrius, with rich gifts, it is said, and depicted to him the conditions of Judaea in the gloomiest colors. They charged Judas and the Assideans with being the cause of the recent disturbances, and indicated that while Judas was living, peace was impossible. Demetrius welcomed these complaints, because they gave him an opportunity to impress his power on the little country that almost tore itself loose from Syria. He did not for a moment intend to repeat the follies of his uncle, and to attempt new religious persecutions; but, by the appointment of a high priest of his own choice, at once also the political head of the state, he would show the Judaean people that he was their master. He appointed Alcimus high priest and sent an army to Jerusalem, under command of the stern and implacable Bacchides, to silence any opposition and crush any resistance. Bacchides arrived at Jerusalem with peace on his lips; but Judas, his brothers, and their followers, were not deceived. Convinced that he had designs upon their lives, and that his chief object was the subjection of the people, they left the capital and hastened to the mountains. The Assideans, however, suspected nothing, having confidence in Alcimus, because he was a de-

scendant of Aaron. A large assembly of the most highly-respected scholars, perhaps the entire body of the newly restored Great Assembly, welcomed Bacchides and Alcimus, assuring them of their longing for peace and asking them to put an end to all disturbances and restore quiet and order to the country. The new high priest, on his part, assured the people that he would restore peace and prosperity to the country, and pledged his promises with a solemn oath. But as soon as he took possession of the city, and the temple, he ordered Bacchides to execute in one day sixty of the Assideans who had gone over to his side, among them probably also his uncle Josè, son of Joezer. This outrage, coupled with perjury, spread consternation and sorrow throughout the country. Many of those who had previously gone over to the party of Alcimus left him again, and joined the Asmonean brothers at Modin.

When Bacchides soon after surrounded a number of the former partisans of Alcimus, who had left him, and murdered them and cast their bodies into a cistern, the flames of civil war blazed forth again (161 B. C. E.). Men and youths who loved freedom and their country, again gathered about Judas Maccabeus, while the ambitious, the pleasure seekers and the violators of the Law, joined Alcimus. Thus, two hostile parties again faced each other. The Hellenistic party was stronger at first, because it enjoyed the protection of the foreign troops. Accompanied by these troops, Alcimus traveled through the country to demand obedience to Demetrius and to compel the acknowledgement of his own authority. However, with the gradual increase of the number of his adherents, Judas again led expeditions against the Hellenists, chastised the renegades, and spread such terror in their ranks, that they dared no longer remain in the

country towns. Alcimus' following was thus confined to Jerusalem. Alcimus, like his predecessors, sought to inspire respect by overawing the people with his influence at the Syrian court, rather than by winning their love. He therefore hastened to Antioch, lodged new complaints and accusations against the Maccabeans, and was again favorably received.

Demetrius ordered Nicanor, his companion in his flight from Rome and the commander of the elephant troops, to proceed against the rebellious Judaeans, and to give them no quarter. Nicanor, also, found it necessary to appear friendly at first; he wanted to gain time until the arrival of all his troops before he began the prosecution of the war. Rumor has it that Nicanor, learning of Judas' valor and magnanimity, became a great admirer of the great Maccabean, and desired to bring about a reconciliation between him and the king. He sent three trustworthy men, Posidonius, Theodotes and Mattathias to Judas with proposals for terms of settlement which were agreeable to the Maccabeans. A personal interview between the two commanders took place, and Nicanor was so fascinated by Judas' personality that he advised him to marry after the conclusion of peace, in order to perpetuate a heroic race. These friendly relations, however were severed by Alcimus, who informed the king that Nicanor was acting against his orders, was favoring Judas, and was thinking of appointing him to the high priesthood. The king thereupon issued strict orders to Nicanor to break off all negotiations, and rather to send Judas in chains to Antioch.

Warned in time that Nicanor's friendship could not be depended upon, Judas withdrew to the mountains. Nicanor and his troops followed, and in the subsequent engagement, Nicanor was defeated and had to retire to the Acra. Embittered at this de-

feat, Nicanor renewed the war with energy, and was particularly determined to lay his hands on Judas Maccabeus. Proceeding to the Temple Mount, he demanded that Maccabeus be delivered to him; and when the priests and the members of the Great Assembly, protesting their loyalty to the king, declared their inability to comply with his request because they didn't know Judas' whereabouts, Nicanor raised a threatening hand against the temple, and swore that he would reduce it to ashes if Judas be not delivered to him. To emphasize his demand that the Judeans themselves surrender Judas to him, Nicanor ordered that Ragesh, or Razis, the most respected man in Jerusalem, called the "father of the Judaeans" because of his great popularity, be seized and held as a hostage. To escape arrest, Ragesh is said to have committed suicide. Nicanor, at the head of a large army, pursued Judas in the mountains, and pitched his camp in Beth-horon. Judas, with only three thousand men, took his stand at Adarsa, four miles from Nicanor's camp. A battle followed and Judaean valor was again victorious over superior numbers. Nicanor lost his life at the very beginning of the engagement, and his army fled in all directions. The inhabitants of the towns and villages through which the fugitives fled, joined in the pursuit and annihilated the enemy so completely, that, it is said, none reached Gazara, the objective point of the Syrian's flight. The victory of Adarsa was so decisive, that the day on which it occurred, the thirteenth of Adar (160 B. C. E.), was observed a long time as a festival, like the days of the dedication of the temple, under the name of Nicanor's Day. Nicanor's head and arm were hung by the victors on the walls of Jerusalem as a trophy.

Judas and the Asmoneans were again masters

JUDAH BEFORE NICANOR'S ARMY

By Doré

of Jerusalem, since Alcimus had fled even before the battle took place. But Judas, realizing the insecurity of his position, and knowing that Demetrius would seek to avenge the defeat of the Syrian army, took a step of questionable wisdom; he opened negotiations with Rome, which was already then all-powerful, for protection against Syria. For this purpose he ordered two Greek-speaking Judaeans, Eupolemos, son of Johanan, of the priestly family Ha-Koz (Akkos), and Jason, son of Eleazar, to proceed either directly to Rome, or to lay their case before the Roman ambassadors, who frequently traveled through Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor. However, before the Judaean ambassadors reached their destination, the war with Syria broke out afresh.

As soon as he learned of Nicanor's defeat, Demetrius ordered the inexorable Bacchides, with a thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry, to march against Judaea. Bacchides proceeded through Galilee to the Plain of Jezreel, killed the Judaeans he encountered, and in the spring stood at the gates of Jerusalem. Judas was compelled to leave Jerusalem, because the capital, having been deprived of its walls, could offer no protection; and he issued an appeal to all men who loved their country, their faith, and freedom, to come to his assistance. However, only three thousand responded to his call. The people at large were either weary of fighting, or felt that the present war was a political rather than a religious one, since Demetrius did not attempt to interfere with their faith. Many of the Assideans resented the step taken by Judas in opening negotiations with the Romans rather than relying upon the help of God. Judas with his small band proceeded southward, since the northern mountains were no longer secure, and encamped at Eleasa. Bacchides overtook

them. At the sight of the mighty Syrian army the Judaeans lost heart. They insisted that the struggle be abandoned for the present, that the small band scatter and await reinforcement. Judas sought in vain to arouse their courage; only eight hundred men remained. With the bravest of this handful Judas attacked and defeated Bacchides' right wing and pursued it to the border of Azotus (Ashdod). But the remaining Judaean warriors were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Syrian left wing, and were routed; and when Judas returned from his pursuit, he had to resume the struggle with the victorious left wing. He and his men performed prodigies of valor. Dead and wounded fell on both sides; the battle continued from morning till nightfall. But the number of the Judaeans dwindled steadily, and the remnant was surrounded by the enemy. Judas Maccabeus also fell, at last, sword in hand, and the few survivors fled. Judas' brothers had at least the satisfaction of saving his body from insult, and of giving it an honorable burial. The defeat at Eleasa (April, 160 B. C. E.) seemed to have undone all that the heroic struggles had accomplished hitherto. The valiant Asmonean army was no more. Alcimus was again in possession of the capital and of the temple. He had triumphed.

And yet, the Maccabean struggles of many years' duration were not in vain. They awakened the Judaeans from their torpor and rejunevated them. The blood of martyrs heals wounds, says the proverb. The bloody sacrifice brought by the Maccabeans did in fact heal ancient wounds. Outwardly the stigma was removed from off the Judaean name. The sarcastic Greeks no longer dared make sport at the sight of a Judaean army, and the Judaeans needed no longer the puerilities of Olympic games in order to prove their equality. In-

wardly, the Judaean people learned to know itself and its mission; it proved itself to be a people called to bear the standard of its own Law and its own ideals, and evinced strength enough to protect those sacred possessions. The ideal of self-sacrificing devotion which Elijah first held up to a small circle, and which the second Isaiah preached with such fiery eloquence, was now accepted as a self-evident duty by the Judaean people as a whole, as a result of the struggles and the martyrdom of the Maccabean heroes.

THE EPOCH OF THE ASMONEAN PRINCES

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST ASMONEAN HIGH PRIESTS: JONATHAN AND SIMON

(160-143 B. C. E.)

The heroic death of Judas Maccabeus on the battlefield of Eleasa called forth a cry of sorrow and despair from the people of Judaea. Judaea was orphaned, indeed. The discord and wretchedness that followed brought the nation to the brink of destruction. "There was distress in Israel, the like of which had not been witnessed since the prophets ceased from the land" (I Maccabees 9: 27). All national and political ties seemed to be severed, and a state of anarchy ensued. The Syrians could enforce their authority only by the sword, and were concerned more with the collecting of taxes than with the establishing of order. Alcimus installed as high priest by foreign rule, and acknowledged the head of the nation by virtue of his sacred office, hence was unpopular and enjoyed but little authority. Between the hated Hellenists, the adherents of the high priest, and the nationalists, there was constant friction and strife. To this civil war were added the miseries of famine.

In this crisis, a number of brave souls joined the

standard of the Asmonean brothers, Jonathan, Simon and Johanan, and continued the combat with Bacchides and the Hellenists. That number, however, was very small. The people, as a whole, remained passive; it was exhausted. The lofty enthusiasm which the early Maccabean struggles engendered and which found expression in many a daring deed of heroism subsided. Quite naturally, the mind cannot remain too long in a state of excitement; the excitement must spend itself. An entire nation cannot remain under arms year after year. Moreover, the main object of the early wars had been accomplished. The freedom of religious worship was not interfered with by Demetrius. Sacrifices were offered in the temple in accordance with the prescription of the Law; and though Alcimus was not popular, he was at least of pure priestly descent, and this satisfied the people. Even the Assideans, who in the beginning were carried away by their enthusiasm to the point of reckless, death-defying courage, no longer supported the Asmonean brothers, because the latter sought to strengthen their position by diplomatic negotiations. From the point of view of the Assideans, reliance upon outward help implied a lack of faith in God: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to confide in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to confide in princes." It was possibly this dissatisfaction that restrained the Assideans from reinforcing the Maccabean army, a circumstance that was responsible for the death of Judas Maccabeus.

The Assideans sulked in a corner and remained passive. The two remaining parties, however, the Asmoneans and the Hellenists, faced each other, each armed, each bent upon the destruction of the other. The Asmoneans were not satisfied merely with having prevented the desecration of the temple and the return of religious persecution; they

desired to remove the cause that brought about those evil days. Judaea must no longer bear the yoke of the hated Greeks, and the fate of Judaism must no longer depend upon the caprice of a Syrian tyrant or upon the intrigues of a traitorous party. They were all the more deeply incensed at the Hellenists because the latter were willing to sacrifice not alone their religion but also their fatherland. This feud between the parties created a state of anarchy in Judaea. The Asmoneans looked to Jonathan Apphus for leadership; but Jonathan did not possess the military energy of his brother Judas Maccabeus. He was more of a statesman than a general. Too weak to attack Bacchides and his army, he had to confine himself to the defensive. Pursued by Bacchides, the Asmoneans entrenched themselves in the forest-thickets of the Jordan, sending their wives and children across the river to the friendly tribe of the Nabateans. On their way thither, the families of the Asmoneans, in charge of Johanan, were attacked and annihilated by the hostile tribe of the Bene Amri, of the city of Medeba, partisans of the Syrians. Jonathan later avenged this outrage and the death of his brother.

Bacchides sought the Asmoneans out in their hiding place in the Jordan valley and attacked them on a Sabbath when they were not in a condition to defend themselves properly. The Asmoneans saved themselves by swimming across the Jordan. The entire country west of the Jordan was thus in the power of the Syrians, and Bacchides was vigilant in preventing the Asmoneans from undertaking any new enterprises. With this object in view, he rebuilt the dismantled fortresses, fortified them still more strongly, and placed garrisons therein well supplied with arms and provisions. To make sure of the loyalty of the people still further, Bacchides

took the children of the most prominent families as hostages and placed them in the Acra. Thus, within the space of one year, Bacchides accomplished what several generals had failed to do in six years; he broke completely the armed resistance offered to the Syrians. Had Demetrius desired to lay violent hands upon the religion of Israel, he could have never found a more opportune moment. The king, however, contented himself merely with asserting his sovereignty over the country, in order to derive his annual tribute from Judaea. Even the death of Alcimus produced no change in this policy of the Syrian court. This high priest, though not popular, did never belong to the extreme Hellenists. He was merely an ambitious man, who clung to the powers that be. Alcimus committed only one offense, though it involved no religious violation. He began to tear down the inner wall in the Temple that served as a barrier beyond which the gentiles and those who had become unclean in consequence of contact with a dead body durst not go, with the evident intention of granting the pagans wider access to the temple. This act so outraged the zealots, that when Alcimus was stricken with paralysis soon after, and died from its effect (159 B. C. E.), they regarded it as a divine punishment for his desecration of the temple. The Syrian court allowed the high priestly office to remain vacant. Bacchides withdrew with his troops, and the land of Judaea enjoyed tranquillity for two years (159-157).

This tranquillity was utilized by the Asmoneans, under Jonathan and Simon, to strengthen their position. They fortified Beth-hoglah, an oasis in the wilderness of Jericho, not far from the Jordan, and made it their retreat. Jonathan might have been regarded merely as a Bedouin chieftain who defies the power of the government, were it not for the

higher authority he enjoyed among the people who sympathized with him because he was fighting for a holy cause. He and his men undoubtedly took advantage of the absence of Syrian forces to wreak their vengeance upon the Hellenists, for the latter again complained to the Syrian court of the Asmonean insolence. Bacchides who had experienced the difficulties of leading regular troops in a guerilla warfare in an unfavorable territory, hesitated and was induced to take up arms again only by the offer of the Hellenists to fall secretly upon Jonathan and Simon and to deliver them into his hands. The plot, however, was discovered in time to enable the Asmoneans to take the necessary precautions. Bacchides, who had counted upon a short campaign, found himself involved in a new war, and besieged the Asmoneans in their fortress of Beth-hoglah. The Asmoneans who had managed to gather a considerable following, divided their army into two divisions. Eluding the vigilance of the besiegers, Jonathan left the fortress with his division, fell upon the Hellenists who accompanied Bacchides, and even cut off the enemy's base of supplies. Simon and his followers succeeded in burning the siege instruments raised by the Syrians. Attacked on two sides, Bacchides was compelled to raise the siege after losing part of his army, and vented his wrath at the failure of the campaign upon the Hellenists, several of whom were executed upon his order.

Jonathan regarded the present mood of the Syrian commander as favorable for negotiations, and actually succeeded in concluding a treaty of peace with him. The conditions were that Jonathan was to be granted absolute and unmolested freedom of movement anywhere in the country, outside of Jerusalem, and that he give hostages for the faithful performance of other promises the nature of

which is no longer known. Prisoners of war were exchanged, Bacchides retired, leaving the Hellenists to their own resources. Jonathan then settled in the fortress of Michmash, where Saul also once lived, was tacitly acknowledged as the head of the Judaean people, and proceeded against their enemies with the utmost severity. This state of affairs, "when war ceased in Israel," continued for nearly four years (155-152 B. C. E.). It is, of course, impossible to tell whither this unsettled condition would have led; it is certain, though, that the dream of the Asmoneans could not have been realized without the occurrence of an unusually favorable incident. A crisis in the Syrian kingdom reacted favorably upon Judaea, and promoted the power of Jonathan and of the nation.

This crisis was brought about by an unknown youth of Smyrna, named Alexander Balas. As Alexander bore a striking resemblance to the Syrian king Antiochus Eupator, Attalus, king of Pergamus, took advantage of this circumstance to set him up as a rival to the hated Demetrius. At first Demetrius paid little attenion to the doings of his rival, but when Alexander landed at Ptolemais, and the Syrian garrison of that city made common cause with him, Demetrius shook off his indolence and looked about him for allies. First of all, he sought to win Jonathan over to his side—addressed a friendly letter to Jonathan in which he made him his ally, permitted him to acquire troops and arms, allowed him to take up his residence in Jerusalem, and returned to him the Judaean hostages who had been held at Antioch. Jonathan availed himself without delay of this favorable opportunity, hastened to Jerusalem, took possession of the city, and began to repair and strengthen its walls. The Hellenists fled from Jerusalem upon his arrival, and sought safety in

the fortress of Beth-zur. Alexander Balas, who was likewise in need of support, also exerted himself to gain Jonathan's alliance, and succeeded. He appointed Jonathan high priest, and sent him a purple cloak and a golden crown, proclaiming him thereby a vassal-prince of the Syrian kingdom and a friend of the king. Jonathan made his first appearance in the temple in the high-priestly vestments on the Feast of Booths (152 B. C. E.)—the first Asmonean to acquire this dignity permanently. After the struggle of twenty-two years, Judaea, deeply humiliated and on the brink of ruin, was thus raised to a position of importance through the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of a handful of men and was to take an active and significant part in the political events of the day.

In the course of the nine years of his government (152-144), Jonathan contributed considerably to the enhancement of the ever-growing importance of Judaea. With the true vision of the statesman, he recognized that it would be to the great advantage of his country to support Alexander Balas rather than Demetrius. Demetrius made all sorts of glowing promises to the people of Judaea, purposely ignoring the high priest appointed by Alexander, and granted special privileges to the Judaeans residing in the Syrian provinces. The people, however, clung to Jonathan and paid little attention to Demetrius's promises; and Jonathan knew Demetrius too well to trust the promise made by him when he was in straits. He remained loyal to Alexander who finally vanquished his rival, and he had no reason to regret the step he had taken.

The upstart of Smyrna was grateful for Jonathan's loyalty, showered honors upon him, and showed in a striking manner how much he was indebted to Jonathan's assistance in the critical days

of his struggle with Demetrius. When he came to Ptolemais to meet Ptolemy VI Philometor of Egypt, whose daughter he was to marry, he invited Jonathan to come to him and treated him as an equal. During the reign of Alexander Balas (152-146), Judaea was placed in a position to recover from the wounds inflicted upon her by treason and tyranny, and was able to send into the field an army of ten thousand armed men.

Jonathan repaid Alexander with unshaken loyalty. When Demetrius II, surnamed Nicator, son of Demetrius I, the legitimate heir to the Syrian throne, took up arms against the upstart, Jonathan supported Alexander though both Rome and Egypt had forsaken him. He attacked Apollonius Daos, Demetrius' general, on the Mediterranean coast, besieged his garrison in Joppa, until its inhabitants opened the city's gates, destroyed the erstwhile Philistine city of Azotus (Ashdod), that embraced the cause of Demetrius, and burned the temple of Dagon. As a reward he received from Alexander the Philistine city of Akkaron (Ekron) with its environs, which, henceforth, formed a part of Judaea (147 B. C. E.).

Jonathan determined to take advantage of the confusion prevalent in Syria, as a result of the rivalry between Demetrius II and Alexander, to get rid of the Hellenists once for all, and besieged the Acra. In their extremity they appealed for help to the new king of Syria, Demetrius II. But when Jonathan came to him with rich gifts, and as Demetrius, hard pressed by his enemies, needed the former's assistance, he confirmed Jonathan in the high-priesthood. Jonathan also took advantage of the king's lack of funds to acquire for Judaea freedom from further tributes, and to annex three Samaritan districts to Judaea for the round sum of three hundred silver talents ($450,000). However,

in spite of his solemn pledge, Demetrius soon regretted this concession. The Syrian princes, to their very last descendants, never hesitated to perjure themselves. The Judaean army, however, soon experienced the unexpected satisfaction of wreaking their vengeance on the Syrian capital for the repeated outrages perpetrated by the Syrians against Jerusalem. Demetrius excited the animosity of the people of Antioch to such an extent that they laid siege to the palace, while the mercenaries refused to come to the king's assistance because their wages had not been paid. In this extremity Demetrius resorted to the painful necessity of calling upon Jonathan to come to his rescue. The three thousand Judaean mercenaries whom Jonathan sent to Antioch destroyed a portion of the capital by fire, and forced the populace and the rebellious soldiers to raise the siege and to beg the king's forgiveness. But no sooner was Demetrius rescued from his dangerous position than he repaid his rescuers with base ingratitude, and treated them with hostility. Jonathan, outraged at this perfidy, turned his support to the young king Antiochus V, son of Alexander Balas, and to his regent Diodotus Tryphon. In appreciation of his services, they confirmed him in the high priesthood, and appointed his brother Simon the Syrian commander of the Mediterranean coast, from Tyre to the borders of Egypt. The Asmonean brothers fought valiantly in the cause of Balas' young son, for his victory spelled the independence of Judaea. Though sustaining defeats now and then, the Asmoneans were victorious in the end, besieged and captured several cities on the Mediterranean coast, and entered Damascus. They expelled the Hellenists from Bethzur and placed a garrison in that fortress. Above all, the Asmoneans concentrated their efforts upon making Jerusalem invincible. They heightened the

walls of the city on all sides, and built a strong rampart in the middle of the city, opposite the Acra, in order to cut off the communication of the Hellenists who still maintained themselves in that stronghold. The Asmoneans did not consider the time opportune for laying siege to the Acra, though their army at that time (144-143) numbered forty thousand picked men.

Consequent events only proved too plainly that the precautions taken by the Asmoneans in fortifying their country and in maintaining a considerable army was not superfluous. As soon as Diodotus Tryphon, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian armies, found himself in supreme power, he began to carry out the treacherous plan of removing the puppet-king Antiochus V, in whose name he governed, and of placing the crown of Syria upon his own head. The greatest obstacle to the accomplishment of his purpose seemed to him to be Jonathan, who was extremely loyal to the son of Alexander Balas. Tryphon determined therefore to remove Jonathan out of the way; and, by employing deceit, actually succeeded in bringing the most prudent of the Asmoneans within his power. Learning that Tryphon had arrived at Beth-shean (Scythopolis) with an army, Jonathan hastened to meet him with a large force, but was received with so much flattery and with so many marks of honor that he fell into the trap. Tryphon promised to turn over the important city of Acco (Ptolemais) to Jonathan, persuaded him to leave the greater part of his army behind, and followed him to Acco whither Jonathan had gone to take possession of the city. Of the three thousand men he had taken with him, Jonathan sent two thousand to Galilee, and was accompanied by only one thousand men on his arrival at Acco. In accordance with Tryphon's prearranged scheme, Jonathan was taken

prisoner immediately upon arriving at the fortress, and his men were butchered. Tryphon sent a part of his army to pursue and to annihilate the Judaean troops who were to remain in the Plain of Jezreel and Galilee. The latter, however, had been informed of the treachery perpetrated upon their leader, turned upon the pursuers, and forced them to withdraw.

The news of Tryphon's treachery which these returning troops brought to Jerusalem, spread sorrow and consternation. Everyone believed that Jonathan had shared the fate of the thousand who perished at Acco. A new subjugation on the part of the Syrians with all its wretched consequences seemed nigh and inevitable, and it was suspected that the Hellenists had a hand in the matter. There was, in fact, a secret understanding between Tryphon and the Hellenists to the effect that the former was to attack Jerusalem from without and the latter from within. This double danger, however, was averted by Simon Tharsi, the last of the Asmonean brothers. Simon convoked a great assembly of the people in the temple court, and though advanced in years, showed such youthful energy that he raised the people from despair to the hope of ultimate victory; and when he exclaimed, "I am not better than my brothers; far be it from me to spare my life in a time of evil" (I Maccabees 13: 5), the assembly responded in one voice: "Be thou our leader as Judas and Jonathan thy brothers have been." Thus placed at the head of Judaea by the confidence the people reposed in him, Simon first took the necessary measures to guard Jerusalem against any attack from without or from within, sent a part of his army to Joppa to prevent the enemy from landing there, and himself proceeded to Adida with the rest of the army to await the

approach of the enemy through the lowland (Shephelah) on the Mediterranean coast.

As a matter of fact, Tryphon had intended to fall upon Judaea before the country could recover from the shock caused by his audacious crime, and be in a position to offer resistance. He led Jonathan with him as his prisoner, and spared his life thus far because he expected to derive more benefit from the danger hanging over the head of the nation's beloved chief than from his death. But as soon as he heard that Simon, at the head of an army, was prepared to defend the nation, Tryphon opened communication with him, pretended that he had made Jonathan prisoner only to enforce the payment of one hundred talents which the Judaean people owed the royal treasury, and pledged himself to release Jonathan upon the payment of this debt and upon receiving two of his sons as hostages. Simon saw through the hollowness of the pretence, but agreed to Tryphon's terms in the hope of saving his brother. Tryphon received the desired payment and the hostages, but failed to release Jonathan and continued the prosecution of the war. Prevented by the Judaean army from following the straight road to Jerusalem, he was compelled to march by circuitous paths. But a heavy snowfall, rather unusual for that hot region, made the roads of the mountains of Judah impassable, and forced him to retreat across the Jordan. Chagrined at the miscarriage of his plans, Tryphon ordered the execution of Jonathan (143 B. C. E.). Simon recovered the body a little later, and had it interred in the family tomb of the Asmoneans at Modin, amidst the sorrow and grief of the entire nation. Thus died the fourth Asmonean brother. Judas Maccabeus performed greater heroic deeds and left behind him a more glorious military renown, but Jonathan raised his nation to a position of

power and influence, and made his family illustrious by the high-priesthood which he had won for himself and his successors.

Simultaneously with the development of the Judaean state under the stress of the political struggles, the Judaean Law found its development in a different atmosphere, and reached such a stage of splendor as to exert an influence upon the course of human culture. The political growth of Judaism had its origin in Judaea, its intellectual growth in Egypt. The wonderland of the Nile, once the cradle and the school of adversity of the people of Israel, became the school of wisdom for the Judaean nation in the course of this period. The Greek rulers of Egypt, like the Pharoahs of old, encouraged the settlement of the Judaeans in Egypt, and, in consequence, they spread over the entire stretch of territory from the Libyan desert to the border of Ethiopia in the south. Like the ancient Israelites in the course of their sojourn in Egypt, their descendants, the Judaeans, multiplied and increased, partly by the accession of Judaeans from Palestine, so that, out of the small colony planted in Egypt by Ptolemy I, they numbered a million souls a hundred years later. The cities of Cyrenaica (the modern Tripoli) and of the habitable portion of Libya contained a large Judaean population that enjoyed full rights of Greek citizenship, and was exceedingly proud of that equality. The Judaeans of Egypt first began to take an active part in the political affairs of the country when the strife between the Syrian and Egyptian courts became violent, and each side was seeking to induce the Judaeans to embrace its cause. The Egyptian Judaeans, however, always remained loyal adherents of the Ptolemys and supported them as much as possible. For this reason the sixth Ptolemy, Philometor, heartily welcomed the large number of

Judaean fugitives who fled from the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Among these fugitives was the son of the high priest Onias III, and other persons of prominence. It was the policy of Egypt to treat the fugitives kindly, in the hope that, by their help, the Ptolemys might regain Palestine that had been wrested from them by Antiochus the Great. Of course, neither Egypt nor Syria had the least intimation that the struggle with the Syrians in which the Judaean patriots were engaged would take an unexpected turn, and would lead to the independence of Judaea to a certain extent.

The Judaean population was mostly concentrated in Alexandria, which, next to Rome, was of the greatest commercial and political importance, and, next to Athens, the center of the arts and sciences. Of the five quarters into which Alexandria was divided, designated by the first letters of the Greek alphabet, the Judaeans occupied two almost entirely. One of these, the Delta, which lay on the seashore, was inhabitated by the Judaeans exclusively, and they took advantage of their situation to engage in shipping and exports. The large supply of grain that Rome imported from the rich granaries of Egypt for its slothful population was undoubtedly laden also on Judaean ships and brought to the market by Judaean merchants. This commercial activity led to prosperity and to a refined standard of life. But commerce was not the exclusive occupation of the Alexandrian Juadeans any more than it was exclusively in Judaean hands. Because of their eagerness for knowledge and their adaptability, they learned the arts and crafts from the Greeks; and when artists were needed for the Jerusalem temple, they were imported from the Judaean community of Alexandria. The Judaeans of Egypt and Cyrene soon mastered the melodious Greek tongue, and absorbed themselves in Greek

literature. The higher occupations in which they were engaged, and their prosperity and education gave the Alexandrian Judaeans a certain sense of self consciousness and pride, such as was possessed later on by the Spanish Jews. The Alexandrian community became the center of the Judaean colony of Egypt, and Judaeans from other countries, even from Judaea, derived strength and inspiration from it.

The community of Alexandria possessed synagogs, bearing the name *proseucha,* in all sections of Alexandria, and the chief synagog was distinguished by its artistic architecture, its elegance and splendor. The synagogs of Alexandria, and presumably also throughout Egypt, served as schools likewise; and on Sabbaths and holidays, after the reading of the pentateuchal and prophetic portions, scholars used to rise and deliver a discourse, in Greek, on the scriptural portions that were read in the course of the service. But the Alexandrian community reached the height of its splendor by the acquisition of prominent fugitives who sought safety in Alexandria from Syrian persecutions. The most important figure among these was Onias IV, the young son of the last legitimate high priest. As has been intimated above, Onias was received most graciously by Philometor; and, when Menelaus was executed, and Demetrius became king of Syria, he flattered himself that he might be appointed high priest by the new king, to succeed his father. But when Alcimus was appointed high priest, with the support of the Syrian king, Onias gave up all hope of the high priesthood and settled in Egypt permanently. With Onias there migrated to Egypt a man of special significance named Dositheus, and these two were destined to play an influential part in the affairs of Egypt.

The occasion for their activity was furnished by the rivalries between the two brothers, the kings of Egypt, the gentle Philometor, and the savage Euergetes II, a monster in body and soul, who was nicknamed Physcon (big belly) on account of his bodily disfigurement, and Cacoergetes (the evil doer), on account of his evil disposition. The brothers hated and made war on each other, and were goaded on by the Roman senate to mutual acts of hostility in the hope that the weakness of Egypt would render that country an easy prey to the Romans. But Philometor once dared defy Rome because of its support of Physcon, and entrusted his army to the leadership of Onias and Dositheus, of whose ability he must have had some convincing proofs beforehand. Through the skill of the two Judaean generals, Philometor succeeded in weakening his brother to such an extent that he could have rendered him harmless for all time. From that time (153 B. C. E.), Onias and Dositheus stood high in the favor of Philometor and remained the commanders of his army. Onias enjoyed the respect of his fellow Judaeans likewise. Separated as they were by their own laws and customs from their native and Greek fellow citizens, the Judaeans of Alexandria must have regarded it as a great boon to have at their head a man who possessed sufficient authority to hold them together and to unite them into a community. As such, Onias was acknowledged as chief or tribal prince (Ethnarch) of the Judaeans. This office gradually assumed great importance. The ethnarch had charge of the internal, communal affairs of his coreligionists, exercised judicial powers over them, and had the authority to enforce the maintenance of contracts and agreements. He was also the representative of his coreligionists at the royal court. The Judaeans were thus happily situated to

form a powerful unit under a chief of their own who held a sort of princely dignity.

The unity of the Judaeans of Egypt was strengthened by another circumstance. Despite the high esteem in which he was held by Philometor and by his coreligionists, Onias regretted sadly the loss of the high priestly dignity of which he was deprived by the political conditions of Judaea; and he conceived the plan of erecting a temple in Egypt to take the place of the desecrated sanctuary of Jerusalem, with himself as its legitimate high priest. History, unable to look into the innermost heart of man, cannot tell whether Onias was influenced by religious zeal or by ambition. To gain the hearty approval of the Judaeans, Onias pointed out that, in the execution of his plan, the prophecy of Isaiah: "On that day there shall be an altar of the Lord in Egypt" (Is. 19:19), would find its fulfilment. Philometor, in appreciation of Onias' services, readily agreed to his plan, and conceded to him for this purpose a strip of land in the region of Heliopolis, north of Memphis, in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites once sojourned till their departure from Egypt. In the little town of Leontopolis, on the ruins of the temple of the goddess Bubastis where animals once received divine honors, Onias erected a sanctuary to the God of Israel (153-152). Outwardly this temple did not resemble that of Jerusalem, for it was in the shape of a tower and was built of burnt brick; the interior arrangements, however, were copied from the Jerusalem temple. Priests and Levites who had fled to Egypt from the persecutions in Judaea officiated in the new temple with sacrifices and liturgy. The generous Philometor provided for the maintenance of the temple and its priests by turning over to them the income from the taxes of the Heliopolis region. This entire territory which be-

came a small ecclesiastical state, received the name of Onion, and proved another tie of union among the Judaeans of Egypt.

Although the Judaeans of Egypt regarded the temple of Onias as the center of their religious activity and made pilgrimages to it on the occasion of the festivals, they never intended, as the Samaritans did, to disregard the temple of Jerusalem, and to look upon their own as its rival or its superior in holiness. On the contrary, they honored Jerusalem as the Holy City, and its temple as the house of God. But they were none the less proud of their own temple, since it embodied the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, and they renamed Heliopolis the "City of Righteousness," to render that fulfilment more complete.* Under quieter and more favorable conditions, the people of Judaea might have regarded the temple of Onias as they did the Samaritan temple of Gerizim, and might have expelled its adherents from the congregation of Israel. But Judaea and the temple were both in a precarious condition when the first news of the erection of the temple of Onias reached Jerusalem, and there was no occasion to condemn a deed that was performed with the very best of intentions. There was still less occasion to censure the founder of the new temple since he was a descendant of a long line of legitimate high priests. Later on, when the Asmonean high priests restored the worship of the temple of Jerusalem in all of its purity, the Palestinian Judaeans deplored the existence of another temple in a foreign land. The new temple, however, had meanwhile in the course of the years, become greatly endeared to the hearts of Egyptian Judaeans. But the devout could not free themselves

* In Is. 19:18 the LXX reads עיר הצדק instead of עיר החרס.

from an uneasy feeling that the temple of Heliopolis was founded in violation of a biblical law.

Philometor permitted Onias to erect a fortress in the district of Onion for the protection of the temple; a Judaean garrison was placed in that fortress, and was, of course, under the command of the high priest. Onias was at the same time appointed military governor of the district of Heliopolis, known as the Arabian district, and was, hence, styled Arabarch. In Alexandria Onias was the communal and judicial head of the Judaeans; in the domain of Onion, or in Arabic Egypt, he was the governor of the Judaean military settlement. So implicit must have been the confidence reposed by Philometor in Onias as well as in his coreligionists, that he entrusted him with the supervision over the harbors of the sea and of the Nile, and thus gave him charge of the collections of the enormous revenues from custom and duties on raw and finished products that made Egypt the richest country in the world during the reign of the Ptolemys and in Roman times.

Another event of far greater importance and of the most far reaching influence upon the world's history, took place at the same time and in the same country. The fugitives from Judaea, who made so many sacrifices for the sake of their ancestral Law, may have excited a desire on the part of King Philometor who was a man of culture and a patron of learning to become acquainted with the Law they honored so highly. Whatever the cause may have been, it was of great moment for the Alexandrian Judaeans that a translation of the Pentateuch was made in the cultured tongue of the Greeks. How the translation was brought about is not known. To all appearances, the work was entrusted to five translators in order to facilitate the labor, so that each book of the Pentateuch

had a different translator. The Greek translation of the Torah was also a temple, as it were, a literary sanctuary in honor of the God of Israel erected on foreign soil, and its completion filled the Judaeans of Alexandria and of Egypt with deep joy. They were happy in the consciousness that the Greeks, who prided themselves upon their wisdom, would finally learn to acknowledge that the wisdom of Judaism was loftier and of greater antiquity than Greek philosophy, and they hoped that this translation would contribute to the promulgation of the knowledge of Judaism among the Greeks. The day on which the translation was presented to the king was observed annually as a festival among the Egyptian Judaeans. On that day they used to make a pilgrimage to the island of Pharos, and, after offering prayers of thanksgiving, would indulge in feasting either in tents or in the open according to the ability of the pilgrim. This developed later into a general popular festival in which the non-Judaean Alexandrians are said to have participated also.

The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek made an altogether different impression upon the devout in Judaea. To the predisposition on their part to hate everything Hellenic on account of the many misfortunes the Greeks brought upon the nation, there was added the apprehension that the Judaean Law would not lend itself to a true and accurate rendition into Greek. Only the Hebrew seemed to them a worthy vessel for preserving the divine content of the Torah; given a foreign form, this content would appear strange and divested of its divinity. For this reason, the day of the completion of the translation which the Judaeans of Egypt celebrated as a day of joy, was regarded in Judaea as a day of national calamity, similar to the day when the golden calf was made. Such were the opposite views held of this great event.

Judging from the consequences resulting from the Greek translation, both these views were justified. Through its Greek form the Judaean literature was made accessible and intelligible to the Greeks, the bearers of universal culture. The Greeks gradually learned to know it; and, reluctant as they were to accept it, hardly five centuries passed before the contents of Judaism became familiar to the dominant nations of the earth. The Greek translation was the first apostle sent by Judaism to paganism to cure it from its perversities and ungodliness. By the dissemination this translation received later through Christianity, the second apostle of Judaism to paganism, it left its imprint upon the thought and language of the nations to such an extent that there is no cultural language today that has not adopted concepts and phrases from the Judaean literature as a result of this translation. Thus the Alexandrian translation introduced Judaism to the civilized world and made it popular. On the other hand, it contributed unintentionally to a misconception of the Judaean Law, and was, to a certain extent, a false prophet that announced errors in the name of God. In addition to the difficulty of rendering the Hebrew into the Greek which is so inherently different from it, the circumstance that, at that time, neither the Hebrew language nor the content and the true meaning of the Torah were sufficiently well understood, militated against a faithful reproduction of the true sense of each expression. Moreover, the Greek text was not so carefully guarded as to prevent anyone from introducing into it what he regarded as an emendation. This translation was probably utilized for public readings on Sabbaths and holidays, and it rested with the interpreter to make such changes in it as his taste, intelligence or arbitrariness dictated. The Greek text, in fact, was teeming with such

additions and emendations, and these were multiplied later when friction between Judaism and Christianity broke out. In spite of that, the Alexandrian Judaeans, a few generations later, believed in the perfection of this translation to such an extent that they gradually began to regard the Hebrew original as superfluous, and depended solely upon their own text. All the misinterpretations that crept into the Greek Bible incident to ignorance, errors, difficulty of translation, and arbitrary additions they regarded as the word of God; and, as a result, they taught later some things in the name of Judaism that were either foreign or opposed to it. All the triumphs and all the misunderstandings that Judaism experienced in the course of time from its contact with civilized paganism are due solely to this translation.

More than a century later, a Judaean apologetic writer invented the fiction that the translation was accomplished in a supernatural manner by seventy-two translators in seventy-two days. As a result of this wholly unhistoric legend, the translation received the name of the "Seventy-two," or "Seventy" (Septuagint) for short.

The beginning thus made, gave an impetus to the desire of making the other Judaean literary monuments accessible to Greek readers; and, little by little, the historic books were also given a Greek form. Because of the greater difficulty involved, the poetic and prophetic books were not translated into Greek at the time when the Pentateuch and the hisoric books were given a Greek form.

The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek gave rise among the Egyptian communities to the art of preaching. The Egyptian synagogs may have borrowed from Judaea the practice not only of translating into the vernacular the passages read from the Torah, but also that of interpreting and

explaining them for the benefit of the unlearned; but they surpassed their model by far. The Greek-speaking Judaeans of Egypt, under the influences of Greek rhetoric, did not confine themselves to the strict sense of the text, but derived from it observations, admonitions and reflections applicable to present conditions. Thus the mere interpretation of the Law developed into the *homily,* which gradually, after the Greek fashion, assumed a pleasing, artistic form. Homiletics is the offspring of the Alexandrian Judaean community. In Alexandria it was born, reared and matured, and served later as a model for larger circles.

The charm which the Greek-speaking Judaeans found in the biblical material that was made accessible to them, awakened a desire on the part of the more cultured among them to elaborate this material independently, give prominence to the doctrine it contained, and to explain and harmonize whatever seemed striking and contradictory in it. Thus there arose a Judaeo-Hellenistic literature of its own. Little is known of the original of this unique literature in which the spirit of Greece and that of Judaea are fused harmoniously, though they clashed in real life. This literature also seems to confine the principle based upon experience that the poetic and metric forms precede simple prose. Fragments are still extant in which the ancient Hebrew history is presented in Greek verse. This poetic literature seems to have been called into being by the animosity between the Judaeans and the Samaritans.

During the religious persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes, Samaritans, too, seem to have migrated to Egypt, thereby increasing the number of their fellow tribesmen who had lived in Egypt since the days of Alexander. These Egyptian-Samaritans, like the Judaeans, also acquired the

Greek language and manners. But these two neighboring peoples, acknowledging the same God and the authority of the same Torah, retained their ancient hatred of each other, and even in a foreign country made war upon each other with that zeal which sectarians in a strange land display for their home traditions. The translation of the Torah into Greek added fuel to the fire. It angered the Samaritans that the Septuagint deprived them of the proof of the sanctity of their temple, since it did not contain the verse which they inserted in their own Hebrew text: "and ye shall erect an altar on Mount Gerizim!" The Samaritans of Alexandria, some of whom enjoyed the royal favor, induced the gentle Philometor to institute a religious disputation between the warring religious parties which was to decide the superiority of the Judacan or of the Samaritan temple. The Judaean representative was a certain Andronicus, son of Meshullam; the Samaritans were represented by Sabbai and Theodosius. How this religious disputation, the first ever held before a temporal ruler, was carried on, and what its outcome was are no longer known. Each party claimed the victory, and each exaggerated its success. Religious disputations, as a rule, never accomplish any tangible results. The dispute as to the sanctity of Jerusalem or of Shechem seems to have been continued by both sides in Greek verse.

The death of Philometor was followed by a period of anxiety to the Judaeans of Egypt. Ptolemy VII, Physcon, who had shared the government of Egypt for several years with Philometor, and then sought to ruin him, made renewed efforts to gain the throne upon the death of his brother. The population of Alexandria, fond of change, fickle, and thoughtless, was prepared to acknowledge the disfigured monster Physcon as king; but the dowager Queen Cleopatra, who conducted the

government during the nonage of her son, had adherents also, and was supported particularly by Onias and his followers. A compromise was finally reached by which Physcon was to marry his sister and both were to reign conjointly (145 B. C. E.). This incestuous marriage proved a very unhappy one, and quarrels soon broke out between the king and the queen, between the brother and the sister. The lecherous and bloodthirsty Physcon even committed an assault on his wife's daughter, and so filled Alexandria with blood and terror that the greater part of the population left the city. When the monster learned that Onias, on the behalf of the Queen, was gathering an army to attack him, he ordered his soldiers to capture all the Judaean men, women and children of Alexandria, and to deposit them naked and bound in a certain place where they were to be trampled to death by elephants that were to be intoxicated with wine and driven upon the helpless victims. The orders of the monster were executed as far as the capturing of the Judaeans was concerned, but something happened when it came to the carrying out of the last part of the monster's program that the Judaeans regarded as a miracle. The infuriated elephants, instead of rushing upon the helplessly bound Judaeans, rushed in the opposite direction where the king's friends were assembled to enjoy the bloody spectacle, and trampled many of them to death. The Judaeans were thus saved from destruction, and they kept that day as a festival in memory of their marvelous deliverance. Physcon seems to have left the Judaeans in peace ever after.

CHAPTER II

THE ASMONEAN PRINCES SIMON AND JOHN HYRCAN (143-106 B. C. E.)

While the Alexandrian-Judaean community was undergoing a high spiritual development, the Judaean nation at home reached a political height from which it could look down with pride upon the time of its humiliation. Simon Tharsi, Mattathias' last heroic son and Jonathan's successor, well advanced in years but full of youthful energy and fire, took hold of the reins of the government with a firm hand upon the death of his brother. Thanks to Jonathan, he found a strong people, many fortresses that could afford protection against hostile attacks, and only one enemy whom his predecessor had already weakened considerably. The death of Jonathan had, therefore, no crushing effect upon Judaea; on the contrary, it spurred the people on to avenge the death of the noble high priest on the treacherous murderer. Simon had only to fill the void in the leadership. Four promising sons, Johanan, Judas, Mattathias, and one whose name is unknown, stood by the side of their father, and, in the continued struggles, developed into brave warriors.

Simon pursued Jonathan's policy of profiting by the weakness of the enemy, of fortifying the coun-

try, and of extending the territory of Judaea, but he accomplished a far greater achievement. He made Judaea an independent state. Simon's reign of nine years' duration is, therefore, justly described as a glorious one in which the aged could enjoy their declining years in peace, the young could rejoice in their strength, and each man could sit beneath his vine and fig trees with none to disturb him. Simon's very first step was at once a declaration of independence. He refused to ask his Syrian liege-lord to confirm him in the office of the high-priesthood, to which the people had elected him. In anticipation of the war to which such a step would lead, Simon at once put all the fortresses of Judaea in a state of defense and supplied them with provisions, and opened negotiations with King Demetrius II (Nicator), who had been expelled by the usurper, in spite of the fact that Demetrius had repaid Jonathan's services with base ingratitude. Simon sent him a golden crown in recognition of his kingship, and offered to help him against Tryphon, on condition that he acknowledge the independence of Judaea by giving up all claim to taxes or tribute of any kind on the part of Judaea. Simon calculated well. Demetrius, in his need, readily agreed to Simon's proposals, in order to have a faithful ally in Simon close to his forfeited kingdom, in case he undertook an expedition against Tryphon. He addressed a missive to the high priest and "friend of the king," to the elders and the people of Judaea in which he pledged himself to forget the difficulties of the past, to give up all claims to tribute, to leave Judaea in possession of its fortresses, and to maintain peaceful relations with Judaea. The day on which freedom from tribute was granted them the Judaeans regarded of such importance, that it was observed as a semi-holiday among other memorable days. Regarding

the concession of Demetrius as the beginning of their independence, the people of Judaea ceased reckoning time according to the reign of the Syrian kings, and substituted that of Simon. All public records of that year (142 B. C. E.) were dated "in the first year of the high priest, commander and prince, Simon." It was an expression of eagerness on the part of a people that was conscious of its power, and cared little whether or not it had the authority to confer the prerogative of royalty on its leader; for, as a matter of fact, Simon was then no legitimate prince either by recognition of the Syrian court or by popular choice. Simon himself did not regard the granting of the concession as equivalent to absolute independence, and, for this reason, he dated his independent government only from the time when the right of coinage also was conceded to him.

The joy of the people of Jerusalem at the finally achieved independence, so sadly missed since the fall of Judah under its last king Zedekiah, was so great that the representatives of the people felt impelled to inform the Judaeans of Egypt of the great event (143-142 B. C. E.). Out of consideration for the feelings of Onias and of his sons who still had claims upon the high-priesthood, the elders of Judaea took pains to avoid any mention of the high-priesthood in their missive, and informed the Judaeans of Egypt merely that after they had suffered afflictions for a long time, God had hearkened to their prayers, and by His aid they were in a position, at last, to offer sacrifices again without hindrance in the temple which the enemy had so long defiled, to light the lamps in the sacred Menorah, and to place the shew-bread upon the table before the Lord. This tenderly worded letter, avoiding, as it did, any reference to a subject that might hurt their sensitiveness, seems to have made

a good impression upon the Judaeans of Egypt. They also rejoiced in the restored independence of Judaea, and regarded the year in which it was attained as of special significance.

Another important achievement of Simon's was that he expelled the remnant of the Hellenists who still maintained themselves in the citadel of the Acra and in the fortresses of Gazara and Beth-zur, and destroyed their influence. Gazara surrendered unconditionally, and Simon granted its inmates free withdrawal, and had their houses cleared of all idolatrous images. The Hellenists of the Acra, however, had so fortified themselves that they had to be besieged and starved into submission; and when they were finally overpowered, the victors entered the Acra with shouts of joy and with solemn hymns of praise. The day of the fall of the Acra (23rd of Iyyar, May, 141 B. C. E.), was henceforth celebrated annually as a day of joy. The hostile party that for nearly forty years had shaken the foundations of Judaism, had brought untold miseries upon the people by instigating internal and external wars and religious persecutions, and had brought Judaea to the very brink of ruin, that party thus finally disappeared, leaving no vestige behind it. The fortresses from which Simon dislodged the Hellenists were occupied by Judaean garrisons.

What disposition to make of the Acra was a difficult question to decide. The people hated the very sight of it because it had harbored the Hellenists so long, and were for its demolition. Their repugnance to it had a certain religious basis also. The towers of the Acra which the Syrians erected in order to give them command of the city rose above the Temple Mount. This was regarded as a violation of the literally accepted prophecy of Isaiah that, "in the last days, the temple mount shall be erected on the top of the mountain, and shall be

higher than the heights," according to which no hill or building must be higher than the temple. Simon had to take this popular feeling into consideration. On the other hand, he fully realized the military value of the Acra, and the folly of destroying it. A compromise was finally effected. The towers and the bulwarks were dismantled, a work which is said to have occupied three years; the walls, courts and chambers were spared and utilized as barracks and arsenals, and the hated name of Acra was changed to that of Birah (Baris), formerly given to it by Nehemiah. Simon himself took up his residence in the Birah in the midst of his soldiers, and appointed his son Johanan (John) as governor of Gazara.

Of extraordinary importance for the young Judaean state was the conquest of the sea port Joppa (Joffa) which Simon accomplished. The acquisition of this port supplied Judaea with a considerable source of revenue from the customs and the duties upon exports and imports which the Syrian kings had established there.

Demetrius II Nicator, who was compelled to grant independence to Judaea, undertook an adventurous expedition into Persia, and left the government in the hands of his brother Antiochus Sidetes. The latter took up the fight against the usurper Diodotus Tryphon, the treacherous murderer of Jonathan, and Simon came to his assistance both as a matter of policy and of revenge. Antiochus confirmed Judaea in the liberties which his brother had conferred upon it under compulsion (140 B. C. E.); and, in addition, conferred the right of coinage upon Simon as a special indication of the absolute independence of Judaea.

As often happens in the course of human events, the very hand that planted the tree of liberty also placed the gnawing canker in its tender sprouts.

Influenced by momentary benefits, without that far-sighted vision which characterized the prophets of old, Simon thought that the independence obtained at so much cost would be best preserved, and the constant annoyance of the petty Syrian tyrants would be most permanently removed if Judaea were to place itself under the protection of the almighty Rome. Simon, accordingly, dispatched two Judaean ambassadors, Numenius, son of Antiochus, and Antipater, son of Jason, to gain the favor of Rome for an alliance with Judaea. The Roman Senate was not at all averse to forming an alliance even with the smallest nation, in the full conviction that such a seeming favor was only the first step in the process of final absorption by Rome of the smaller state. Rome resembled a faithless guardian who takes all the better care of his ward's property in order to take possession of it in the end. The Roman Senate accordingly informed its allies and vassals that it had taken Judaea under its protection, and ordered the Syrian rulers not to molest Judaea any longer (140 B. C. E.). Hardly two centuries later, Rome demanded that her shameless, bloodthirsty Caesar be worshipped in the Jerusalem temple, and, three decades afterwards, she crushed the power of Judaea forever. Simon and his contemporaries did not foresee the evil consequences that would result from an alliance with Rome, and were rejoicing in the fact that they were styled friends, brothers and allies by the Romans. The nation was so thankful to its leader for this happy achievement that it conferred the hereditary rulership upon him in a formal and solemn manner.

The terms of this covenant have been preserved in a document, and show conclusively how deeply grateful the rejuvenated nation felt toward the Asmoneans. On the twenty-eighth day of Elul (September) of the year 140 (B. C. E.) in the third

year of the high-priesthood of Simon, the priests, the elders, the representatives of the people and the entire population of Jerusalem assembled on the Temple Mount and resolved, in view of the great services that Simon, as well as the Asmonean House, had rendered the people and the sanctuary, to acknowledge him and his descendants after him, until the time when a true prophet should arise, as high-priest and leader (Nassi). In token of his dignity, Simon was to wear a purple cloak and a golden girdle; all public records were to be executed in his name; he was to have authority over peace or war, to appoint civil and military officials, and to have sole charge of the temple. Whoever disobeyed him was to be punished. This popular decree was engraved on bronze tablets, conspicuously placed on a high column, and was preserved in a document in the archives of the temple. Thus, three hundred and fifty years after the fall of Judah and the death of its last king, Israel had a legitimately elected prince once more.

It was only after his formal recognition as prince, that Simon availed himself of the coinage privilege conferred on him by Antiochus Sidetes. This was the first time that Judaean coins had ever been stamped. On the obverse the value of the coin was inscribed in the Hebrew language: "Shekel Israel" (Shekel—60 cents), or half, third and fourth of a shekel, and the reverse contained the legend: "Holy Jerusalem." The date was designated by means of alphabetic characters, and was inscribed above the emblems, symbolic of the high-priesthood, which consisted of a lily (Aaron's branch) on the reverse, and a sort of cup (possibly a representation of an incense bowl) on the obverse. Neither the name nor the office of Simon is mentioned on these coins. The characters on the coins are in ancient Hebrew or Samaritan script, which was more familiar to

COINS OF THE MACCABEAN PERIOD

Inscriptions: 1) A ירושלים קדשה; B שקל ישראל. 2) A (שנה ב') חצי שקל שב; B ירושלים הקדושה. 3) A לחרות ירושלים; B on the right: שמ, on the left: עונ (שמעון). 4) A שמעון נשיא ישראל; B (שנה אח)ת לגאלת ישראל. 5) A שמעון נשיא ישראל; B שנת אחת לגאלת ישראל. 6) A שנת ארבע... חצי; B לגאלת ציון.

the neighboring peoples than the new Hebrew script. Simon's coins that are still extant are dated up to the fifth year of his reign.

Antiochus Sidetes, who showed himself friendly to Judaea at the time he had little hope of overpowering the usurper Tryphon, began to treat Simon with indifference when he was on the point of accomplishing his object, after the Judaeans had rendered him valuable assistance. Not to expose himself to the charge of ingratitude, he declined the two thousand men and money that Simon sent him to assist in the siege of Dora (139 B. C. E.), whither Tryphon had taken refuge. When he ascended the throne, Antiochus ordered his general, Cendebeus the Hyrcanian, to reprimand Simon for overstepping his liberty in taking possession of Joppa, Gazara, and the Acra which the Syrians had not formally relinquished, and to demand either the restoration of those fortresses to Syria or the payment of one thousand silver talents (about $1,500,000) in compensation. Simon refused either demand, and Antiochus ordered Cendebeus to bring Judaea again under Syrian subjection. Fortunately, Simon was in possession of a considerable army, including cavalry. Too old to take the field in person, he entrusted the army to the command of his two sons, Johanan (John) and Judas, who proceeded from Gazara to meet the enemy. Cendebeus had, meanwhile, penetrated into the country as far as Ekron, plundering the inhabitants and taking many of them captive. The armies met near Ekron, and, in the battle that ensued, Cendebeus was defeated and fled to Azotus, which was burned by the Judaeans after offering resistance. Johanan who contributed largely to the success of the war, was surnamed Hyrcan, in honor of his victory over the Hyrcanian Cendebeus. Judas, his younger brother, was wounded in this battle. This was the

last war conducted by Simon (137-136 B. C. E.), and this victory inspired him with the confidence that his sons would be able to uphold the increasing power of Judaea.

The defeat he sustained at the hands of Simon embittered Antiochus Sidetes still more; but too weak to renew the attack, he resorted to deceit in an effort to annihilate the entire house of Asmoneans. With that object in view, he incited the ambition and the greed of Ptolemy ben Habub, Simon's son-in-law, and governor of the district of Jericho, who was led to believe that, by the commission of a crime, and with foreign help, he would be able to achieve the rulership of Judaea. Despite his advanced age, Simon was in the habit of traveling through the country, in order to give personal attention to the administration of justice, and to learn the needs of the people. One of such visits led him to the fortress of Dok (Dagon), near Jericho, where his son-in-law resided, and he was accompanied by his wife and his two younger sons, Judas and Mattathias. His oldest son, Johanan, remained in his castle at Gazara. Ptolemy smiled his hospitality upon his guests and prepared a feast in their honor; and while they were making merry in the happy family circle, free from all suspicion of danger, Ptolemy and his band fell upon them and murdered Simon and his two sons, (February, 135 B. C. E.). Immediately upon the commission of this outrage, the murderer dispatched messengers to the Syrian king asking for the aid of his troops. He also sent hired assassins to Gazara to remove Johanan out of the way, and dispatched emissaries to Jerusalem to take possession of the temple and the city in his name. But he was not to profit by his crimes. Johanan was warned in time by a friend, and Ptolemy's messengers received their just deserts upon their

arrival at Gazara. Johanan also succeeded in reaching Jerusalem before the arrival of Ptolemy's emissaries, and he had no difficulty in winning the people over to his side. The help which the Syrian king sent did not arrive so quickly. All that Ptolemy could do was to enclose himself within the walls of his castle, to defend himself as best he could, and to keep his mother-in-law as hostage. Such was the end of the last of the Asmonean brothers, none of whom died a peaceful death, but all of whom gave up their life for their people and the sanctuary.

John Hyrcan's reign marked the zenith of this period and its turning point. He not only continued but completed the work of his father. Under his predecessors, Judaea was limited to a small area, and even within Judaean territory there were included conclaves of foreign and hostile peoples.

Hyrcan extended the boundaries and freed the nation from the fetters that stunted its growth. This happy consummation was the result of favorable circumstances as much as of his own military valor.

Hyrcan's reign resembles that of Solomon both in its splendor as well as in the circumstance that that splendor marked the middle of his reign, while its beginning and ending were troubled and turbulent. As Solomon, at the beginning of his reign, had to deal with a pretender, Adonijah, and had to render him harmless, so Hyrcan, to a more serious extent, had to remove the obstacles out of his way. One of these was his brother-in-law, his father's murderer, who was to be feared, however, only because he had the power of Syria behind him. But since both duty and his own security demanded that the wretch be punished, he hastened to attack him before Antiochus' troops came to his assistance. The details of the siege and its out-

come are shrouded in obscurity. According to one account, which is certainly embellished, Hyrcan could not press the siege with energy because Ptolemy exposed Hyrcan's mother whom he kept as a hostage to torture on the walls in Hyrcan's sight; though the mother, a true Asmonean, urged her son to disregard her suffering and to avenge himself upon the murderer of her house. As a result Hyrcan's heart was torn between two emotions, revenge of his father's blood, and pity for his mother. The fact is, though, that Hyrcan retired without accomplishing his object because the king of Syria was approaching with an army, with the intention of taking advantage of the siege of Dok to invade Judaea. After the siege was raised. Ptolemy is said to have murdered Hyrcan's mother and to have taken refuge in Philadelphia, the whilom capital of Ammon (Rabbath Ammon); leaving no vestige behind him.

A much greater danger by which Judaea was threatened arose from Antiochus Sidetes who was seeking to avenge his recent defeat. He arrived with a large army (autumn, 134 B. C. E.), devastated the territory through which he passed, and approached the capital. Hyrcan must have felt too weak to risk an open battle, for he barricaded himself in Jerusalem, trusting to the strength of its walls. Antiochus thereupon besieged Jerusalem on all sides. The Judaeans made frequent sallies, and often destroyed the siege works. As a result, the siege dragged on. But as the Syrians were suffering from lack of water with the diseases consequent upon it, and as the food supply was beginning to give out in Jerusalem, and the Feast of Booths was approaching, both sides seemed to incline to peace, and Hyrcan proposed an armistice during the festival. Antiochus not only granted this request, but even donated sacrificial animals

with gilded horns, as well as spices and golden vessels for the temple. When peace negotiations commenced, Antiochus demanded that the Judaeans surrender their arms, pay tribute for Joppa, Gazara and other erstwhile Syrian fortresses, and admit a Syrian garrison in Jerusalem. In the hour of his need, Hyrcan agreed to the first two conditions, but absolutely rejected the last one, knowing that the presence of the Syrians in Jerusalem would inevitably lead to constant friction. He offered hostages and the payment of five hundred talents for the fortresses. The Syrian king who needed money for his projected Parthian war, accepted Hyrcan's terms. Before his departure, Antiochus destroyed the battlement of the upper portion of the walls of Jerusalem, as a sign of victory. The dark cloud that threatened Judaea thus passed over, doing but little damage.

Hyrcan thereupon sent an embassy to Rome to ask the Senate for a renewal of the alliance with Judaea and to complain, at the same time, against Antiochus Sidetes who, contrary to all law, seized the fortresses of Joppa, Gazara, and other places in Judaea. As it was the policy of Rome to embrace the cause of the weak against the strong, and as she was bent upon the humiliation of the Seleucidae, who now and then assumed a spiteful or sulking attitude towards her, the Roman Senate received the Judaean embassadors kindly, listened to them attentively, and decreed that Antiochus must restore all the fortresses in question to Judaea, and that he had no right to lead his troops through Judaea, and to treat its inhabitants as his subjects (about 133 B. C. E.). Antiochus, it seems, yielded to this decree, and was even forced to assume an air of friendship towards Hyrcan. Antiochus was preparing to make war against Parthia that had wrested itself free from Syria. His brother, Dem-

etrius Nicator, who had also undertaken an expedition against Parthia, was defeated and for nearly ten years was kept a prisoner by the Parthians. Antiochus hoped to be more successful than his brother, and was making extensive preparations for the pursuit of war. As the help of Judaea, as well as of the neighboring states was indispensable to him, he called upon Hyrcan and his army to join in the expedition. In the course of the march, the Syrian king treated the Judaean army with consideration. Upon Hyrcan's request, after a victory at the river Zab (Lycus), he halted his army for two days to enable the Judaeans to rest on the Sabbath and the Feast of Weeks which fell on the next day (129 B. C. E.). But fortune deserted the Seleucidan dynasty since the days of Antiochus the Great. Antiochus Sidetes lost his life in the course of this expedition. His brother Demetrius, who was released from prison and set up as a rival king, by the king of Parthia upon the approach of Antiochus, was reigning again (128-125 B. C. E.); but he was so despised by the Syrians on account of his long captivity in Parthia that they deserted him when Ptolemy Physcon of Egypt set up Alexander Zebina as a rival claimant to the Syrian throne. Overpowered by Zebina, the wretched Demetrius was compelled to flee for his life; his wife Cleopatra, who was likewise the wife of his brother Antiochus, refused him refuge in Acco, and he was finally murdered by assasins in Tyre. Conditions in Syria grew still more anarchic under his successors. The rivalry for the throne between the legitimate heir Antiochus VIII Grypus, and his half brother Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, filled the members of the Seleucidan house with mutual hatred, and stained the last pages of its history with blood. Cleopatra, the mother, ordered the assassination of one of her sons (Seleucus) soon af-

ter her husband's death, and mixed a cup of poison for the other, Antiochus Grypus, who, however, forced her to empty the cup herself.

This extreme weakness of Syria that continued for a number of years Hyrcan utilized to extend the boundaries of Judaea as they were in the happy days of old. Immediately upon the death of Antiochus Sidetes, Hyrcan completely severed the relation of vassalage to Syria, under which Judaea was brought as a result of the siege of Jerusalem, and even declined to enter into an alliance with it. At this time (124 B. C. E.), the members of the High Court of Jerusalem addressed another epistle to the Egyptian communities, and to their most prominent man, Judas Aristobulus, who was of high-priestly descent and tutor to the king, calling upon them to celebrate, like their brethren of Judaea, the days of the dedication of the temple (Chanukah) in memory of the victory over Antiochus Epiphanes, and reminded them of the great salvation that God hath wrought among his people by which they were enabled to restore the sanctuary to its pristine purity. This epistle was a hint to the Egyptian communities to acknowledge and adopt the religious customs and ordinances emanating from Jerusalem.

John Hyrcan, who had hitherto confined himself to the defensive, took the offensive against Syria upon the fall of Alexander Zebina (123 B. C. E.). Judaea was hemmed in on three sides by foreign peoples: by the Idumeans in the south, by the hated Samaritans in the center, and, east of the Jordan, by the Greeks, who ever treated the Judaeans with hostility; and Hyrcan determnied upon annexing those territories to Judaea. As the execution of this plan demanded a larger military force than Judaea was in a position to furnish, Hyrcan resorted to the hiring of mercenaries, whom he paid,

as was then supposed, from the treasure he had found in the sepulchre of King David. After capturing the hostile cities of Medeba, east of the Jordan, and Samegas, on the sea of Tiberia, Hyrcan turned his attention to the Samaritan cities. The capital, Shechem, and the temple on Mount Gerizim, that was always a thorn in the eyes of the Judaean people, were destroyed; and the day of the destruction of that temple was observed annually as a special joyous occasion in which fasting and mourning were interdicted. Since then the glory of the Samaritans has vanished, for though they have preserved their identity to this day, and still continue to offer sacrifices on Mount Gerizim, their strength had dwindled into insignificance for lack of a religious center.

After his victory over the Samaritans, Hyrcan proceeded against the Idumeans. This little nation, though greatly reduced in number because of the many vicissitudes it experienced as a result of the change of the successive Asiatic and Macedonian dynasties and though driven from its possession by the Nabateans, succeeded in maintaining itself, and still cherished its ancient hatred against the Judaeans. Hyrcan therefore decided to render the Idumeans harmless. He besieged and razed their two fortresses Adara and Marissa in the district of Gabalene, and gave the Idumeans the choice between accepting Judaism and expulsion. The Idumeans accepted the former; and remained henceforth, outwardly at least, adherents to Judaism. The idolatrous temples of the Idumeans were self evidently destroyed. Jacob and Esau, hereditary enemies for more than a thousand years, were united again, the older serving the younger. In John Hyrcan Judaism evinced religious intolerance for the first time; but it learned soon enough with deep sorrow what a fatal error

it is to drive the zeal for the preservation of one's own religion to the point of converting others. The amalgamation of the sons of Esau with the sons of Jacob proved disastrous to the latter. It was the Idumeans and Romans who dethroned the Asmonean dynasty and brought about the fall of the Judaean state.

The conquest of Idumea and the conversion of its people caused a new war with the city of Samaria, which was occupied largely by Macedonians or Syrians. A colony of Idumeans transplanted by Hyrcan from Marissa to the vicinity of Samaria was mistreated by its neighbors who were spurred on by the Syrian kings Grypus and Cyzicenus. The latter was particularly hostile to Hyrcan, and his troops made incursions into Judaea, captured a few strongholds on the coast, and placed a garrison in Joppa. Hyrcan complained to Rome that Cyzicenus was violating the former decree of the Roman Senate, and the latter ordered Cyzicenus to withdraw from Joppa and to restore the captured strongholds to Judaea. The Senate further granted the Judaeans the right to export merchandise from their harbors, and ordered that no foreigners, not even a king, be entitled to exemption from export duties. Whether Cyzicenus paid heed to the decree of the Roman Senate or not, it was of value to Hyrcan that Rome decided in his favor.

Antiochus Cyzicenus came to the rescue of Samaria that was besieged by the Judaeans because of the mistreatment of the Idumean colony, but was defeated in an engagement with Aristobulus and Antigonus, Hyrcan's sons, who conducted the siege and was forced to flee to Beth-shean (Scythopolis). From that place Cyzicenus called upon Ptolemy VIII Lathyrus, co-regent of Egypt, for assistance. Lathyrus was unfavorably disposed

towards the Judaeans because his mother, Cleopatra, who was forced upon him by the people as co-regent, and who was plotting against him secretly, was favoring them, and was supported by Chelcias (Hilkiah) and Ananias, sons of Onias IV, as governors of the district of Onion. For this reason, Lathyrus seemed to have formed an antipathy to Judaeans in general, and, against his mother's wishes sent an army of six thousand men to the assistance of the Syrian king. Too weak to risk an open battle with the Judaeans, the Syrian king confined himself to devastating the country here and there, in the hope of interrupting the siege of Samaria. The Judaean princes, however, without raising the siege altogether, surprised Cyzicenus, and forced him to retire. Legend has it that one of the victories over Antiochus Cyzicenus was announced to Hyrcan in the Aramaic language, in the very moment of its occurrence by the voice issuing from the Holy of Holies: "The young princes have been victorious over Antiochus." The two generals, Callimanderos and Epicrates, to whom Antiochus turned over the prosecution of the war, were not more successful. The former lost his life in battle, and the latter, yielding to bribery, surrendered to the Judaean princes the city of Beth-shean and other places in the valley of Jezreel as far as Mount Carmel that were formerly in possession of the Greeks. After a year's siege Samaria finally capitulated. Impelled either by vengeance or by a sense of precaution, Hyrcan had Samaria razed to the ground, and ordered its site furrowed with ditches and canals so that not a vestige was left of the erstwhile flourishing city.*

* The day of the restoration of Beth-shean and the Valley of Jezreel to Judaea (15 and 16 of Sivan—June, 109) and the day of the fall of Samaria (25 Marcheshvan—November, 109), were henceforth included among the semi-holidays, or days of memorial, and were observed annually as such.

And so Hyrcan succeeded in carrying into execution the great plans of the Asmoneans. Judaea was secure in its independence, and rose in power above its neighbors; the enemies that threatened it on all sides, Syrians, Idumeans, Samaritans, were conquered for the most part, and the land was freed from the shackles that prevented its development. The happy days of David and Solomon seemed to have returned. Foreign nations had to obey the ruler of Judaea; the old hatred between the brother tribes of Judaea was at an end; Jacob and Esau became twin brothers again. Moabitis, the Daughter of Arnon, again had to send gifts to the mountains of the Daughter of Zion. The Jordan, the Mediterranean coast, and the caravan routes leading from Egypt to Syria, were absolutely in the power of Judaea; and Judaea witnessed the humiliation of its enemy Ptolemy Lathyrus also. Lathyrus became so repugnant to his mother that she incited the people against him and expelled him from Alexandria (108 B. C. E.). In Cyprus, whither he fled, he succeeded in winning over to his side the army that his mother had sent to pursue him. But the Judaean contingent from the district of Onion, under the command of Chelcias and Ananias, sons of Onias, remained faithful to the queen, and pressed Lathyrus so hard that they finally drove him from the island. In Alexandria, as well as in Judaea, the Judaeans took a prominent part in political affairs, and worked for their mutual interests.

As a matter of course, Hyrcan, like his father, had Judaean coins stamped, and likewise in the ancient Hebrew characters. Not so modest as his father, his own name, John High Priest, was stamped on the coins. Some of his coins bore the inscription, next to his own name: "and the commonwealth of the Judaeans" (וחבר היהודים)

as though he found it necessary to indicate that he was using the right of coinage in the name of the people. Other coins of Hyrcan's bear a different inscription: "John, the High Priest, and Head of the commonwealth of the Judaeans" (יוחנן כהן גדול וחבר היהודים). The emblem of his coins is not a lily, like his father's, but a cornucopia, resembling the symbol of the Macedonian kings.

Towards the end of his reign, his ambitious endeavors to enlarge the country and to increase its power, were checked by a tremendous internal movement, which he could not control; and this movement, so insignificant in its beginning, took such an unhappy turn that it undermined the very foundation of the great structure which the Asmoneans had reared with so much effort. The Judaean state, at the zenith of its power, was to realize, for the second time, that its external greatness was not to be of long duration.

The great political upheavals which Judaea experienced under John Hyrcan and his predecessors, could not but have a vital effect upon every expression of the people's life, and could not but awaken their spiritual forces. As a result of the almost continuous struggle of fifty years, of victories and defeats, of contact with friendly and hostile nations and of the transition from a life of simplicity to that of prosperity, the nation reached a higher stage of maturity. While the independence bought at such heavy cost taught the Judaeans to look into their own souls and to cling to their own ideals, it taught them likewise to adopt foreign views and customs so long as these did not conflict with their religion. If the zealots hitherto opposed with all their might anything that bore the Hellenic stamp upon it, many of them arrived at the conviction that, in the expression of Greek life, there were also several things that might be

adopted by them without prejudice to their own form of life. The Judaeans learned from the Greeks, not only the arts of war, such as armaments and the construction of fortification, but also the arts of peace, such as the stamping of coins with tasteful designs and architecture. The Asmoneans erected a magnificent palace in the Greek style of architecture. In front of the palace was an extensive, covered space provided with collonades, called Xystus, near the declivity that separated the upper city from the temple, and was used for popular assemblies. From the Xystus a bridge led to the western gate of the outermost temple court. Another building in the Greek style was used for the sessions of the Great Council, and was provided with an archive for the preservation of important documents. In Modin, the native place of the Asmoneans, Hyrcan erected a family mausoelum, after the Greek style. It consisted of a high structure of white polished marble, surrounded by artistically wrought collonades, and on the columns were sculptured ships and weapons. Above the structure there rose seven pyramids, in memory of the parents of the Asmoneans and of their five heroic sons. The Asmonean mausoleum was so high that it could be seen from the Mediterranean.

But inclined as the Judaeans were to the adoption of things foreign, they were concerned mostly with the maintaining and developing of their own. The Hebrew language which had been almost completely displaced by the Armaic ever since the Judaeans came in contact with the Asiatic peoples, was revived, rejuvenated, and became the vernacular for the second time, though in a modified form. It became all the more endeared to the nation because of the sacred literary monuments it saved from destruction, and from which it derived inspiration. Coins were stamped in Hebrew, public

documents were written in Hebrew, and popular songs were sung in Hebrew. The Hebrew vocabulary was enriched by new formations, and by the adoption of current words and terms from the Aramaic and the Greek which, however, received a Hebrew imprint. This formation of the Hebrew language was henceforth called the New Hebrew (Mishnaic), which is distinguished from the old Hebrew by clearness and simplicity. The leaders who stood at the head of the commonwealth, and the statesmen understood Greek also, because they needed it in their intercourse with the Syrian kings or with the Roman Senate. Greek proper names are more frequently employed than in former days.

The tendency manifested by the popular spirit of Judaea in the period of rejuvenation, is reflected also in the character of its literature. The sweet voice of poetry was hushed; not a trace of any poetic creation is left of this or of the following periods. Instead of peans of victory, this age gave rise to the matter-of-fact historic narrative that recorded for the benefit of posterity the deeds and achievements of the past. History was the only branch of literature that was fostered since this time.

The changed spirit of the age reflected itself in the domain of religion even more than in language, customs, and literature. Whatever had been achieved since the days of Jonathan could indeed be regarded as accomplished in the interests of religion. The victory over the Syrians, the expulsion of the Hellenists, the subjection and the conversion of the Idumeans, the humiliation of the Samaritans, and the destruction of the temple of Gerizim, above all, were looked upon as triumphs of Judaism over its opponents, and were impressed upon the memory of the coming generations by means of celebrations like that of the Festival of

the Dedication (Chanukah). The religious element still remained the basis of every movement, and is clearly seen in the very misuse made of it in forcing Judaism upon the pagans. But the wider outlook upon the real world clarified the religious consciousness, and the acquired insight into the relations of life produced a divergence of views. The group of ultra-zealous Assideans withdrew from the field of action, retired to the seclusion of solitary regions to avoid coming in contact with the world, and organized an order of their own in conformity with their peculiar views and customs, and received the name of Essenes. The majority of the Assideans, however, regarded it rather as a duty, in addition to the strict observance of religious prescriptions, to devote their energies to the acquirement of national independence. A schism consequently occurred within the ranks of the Assideans, giving rise to a national-religious party. This more numerous party began at that time to bear the name of Pharisees (Parushim). But even this party, which was the national centre of gravity demanded that all public affairs and all political enterprises, be gauged by the standard of religious sanctions, because the preservation of Judaism in its traditional form was its chief concern. This demand could not or would not be granted by those who were engaged in military or diplomatic affairs and who arrived at the conviction that the practical relations of life cannot always be regulated by the requirements of religious ordinances. Thus there arose a third party, the Sadducees (Zedukim), that placed the interests of the nation above those of religion, without disloyalty to the latter. Of these three parties, only the Pharisees and Sadducees exerted a powerful influence upon the course of events. These party distinctions were developed in the days of Jonathan.

The Pharisees derived their name from the circumstance that they interpreted the Sacred Scripture upon principles peculiar to themselves, and deduced new laws from this method of interpretation. Occupying themselves with the Law, they formed the learned class in contradistinction to the ignorant classes. The basic principle of their thought and action was that the preservation of Judaism, that is, of the Law and of the customs of the fathers, must be the sole standard for the conduct of the individual as well as of the state. Any deviation from that standard they regarded as treason. If the Sadducees maintained that political relations demanded a different standard, since statecraft and religion were not always compatible, the Pharisees replied that the fate of the state as of the individual depends not upon human activities but solely upon divine dispensation; that the weal or the woe of the Judaean people is decided not by human energy, human wisdom, or military power, but solely by the providence of God. The Sadducees retorted that such a belief, i. e., that the fate of an individual or of a nation does not depend upon the action of that individual or nation, nullified divine justice, since it happens all but too often that the pious and the just are visited with misfortune, while the sun of prosperity smiles upon the unjust and the wicked. This objection the Pharisees obviated by emphasizing the doctrine of reward and punishment after death promulgated by Job's friends. At some future time, God will awaken the dead from the slumber of the grave, and will reward the righteous according to their merits, and will punish the godless according to their misdeeds; "some will awaken to eternal life, and some to eternal shame," as the Book of Daniel announced.

These views, however, concerned only with inner convictions, did not form so strong a line of

demarcation between the two parties as the third Pharisaic doctrine with reference to the extent and validity of religious laws. Alongside of the written Law, customs and usages came into vogue the origin of which was lost in obscurity. If a certain religious custom could not be derived explicitly from the letter of the law, it was made to point back to some great teacher or to the Men of the Great Assembly. Such religious customs and usages were called the "Words of Sopherim" (דברי סופרים). Numerous unwritten usages of this nature that developed within the nation assumed an extraordinary importance in the course of the recent dangers and victories, because the nation had risked its all in their preservation. The martyrdom of many a hero and the opposition to the Hellenists, infinitely increased the attachment of the faithful to every custom and every usage. The temple, so cruelly defiled and so miraculously rededicated, became above all an object of the profoundest veneration. The laws of Levitical purity, as far as they concerned the temple, were therefore observed by the Pharisees with still more scrupulous care and with the utmost vigor.

This outward piety, however, did not exclude inward piety. The Pharisees were distinguished by a strict morality, were modest, moderate in their pleasures, kind and benevolent. One of the leaders of the Pharisees, Joshua ben Perachiah, who, with his colleague Matthai (Nittai) of Arbela, lived in the time of Hyrcan, laid down this maxim to his disciples: "Acquire a teacher for thyself, get thee a comrade, and judge every man leniently." Because of their strict observance of the Law on the one hand, and their leniency on the other, the Pharisees stood in the highest regard of the people. The entire internal administration of the state and of the temple was in their hands.

But the main source of the great influence exerted by the Pharisees was to be found in their deep knowledge of the Law and its application to life. They alone bore the title of scholars and teachers of the Law. In no way do they deserve the opprobrious epithet of hypocrites which, in a later period. their enemies applied to them. In their origin they were rather the noblest preservers and representatives of Judaism and of strict morality. Even their opponents, the Sadducees, could not but testify that "they (the Pharisees) are pining away in this life but would hardly receive their reward in a life to come."

The Sadducees derived their name presumably from a leader named Zadok, and as already indicated, they followed a national-political tendency. To that party belonged the Judaean aristocracy, the valiant soldiers, generals and statesmen, ambassadors to foreign courts and other men of wealth and of influence who had come in closer contact with the outside world, and had adopted more worldly views in consequence. The remnant of the Hellenists, those who grew frightened at the enormity of apostasy and reformed, may also have joined that party. The Sadducees placed the interest of the Judaean commonwealth above those of the Judaean Law; glowing patriotism was their dominant feeling, while religion occupied a subordinated position in their hearts. As practical men of the world, they have come to the conviction that mere faith in God and a strict practice of religious laws would not suffice to preserve the independence of the Judaean state. Their fundamental principle was that every man must bend all his physical and mental powers to the preservation of the state; that religious scruples must not interfere with political alliances, or with the conduct of a war which inevitably involves a violation of

religious prescriptions. According to their view, God endowed man with a free will to enable him to establish his own welfare; man is master of his own destiny, and God does not interest himself in human affairs. Rewards and punishments for man's good and evil deeds follow from his own acts, and there is no need to assume a resurrection after death for the purpose of compensation. Pressed and hemmed in by the abundance of religious ordinances, the Sadducees denied their validity and binding force, and laid down the principle that only those laws were binding which were given plainly and explicitly in the Pentateuchal code, while those which rested upon oral tradition or originated otherwise in the course of time, were of non-effect.

The differences between the Sadducees and the Pharisees embraced judicial, penal, and ritual matters, and the temple ritual was especially a bone of contention between them. The Sadducees, for instance, took the Pentateuchal lex talionis, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" literally, and thereby gained a reputation for cruelty in the administration of justice; while the Pharisees, following their policy of leniency, interpreted that law to imply a money compensation for the loss of an eye or a tooth. The controversy about many ritual questions was carried on with passion on both sides. Such a question concerned itself with the day of Pentecost, which, according to the Sadducees, must always fall on a Sunday; another one was about the pouring of water on the altar during the days of the Feast of Booths. The Sadducees cared little for painstaking avoidance of contact with Levitically unclean persons or things; and when they noticed that the vessels of the temple were subjected by the Pharisees to a process of purification for fear of any possible contact with an un-

clean person or thing, they mocked, saying: "Behold, the Pharisees are cleaning the sun!" But in spite of the Sadducean tendencies to lighten the burdens of religion, that party gained but little popular favor. Alongside of these two, there was formed a third party, or more correctly, a sect or a sort of religious order that far surpassed the Pharisees in strictness and punctiliousness, and laid the foundations for an entirely new historic phenomenon which, intermixed with new elements, gave rise to a universal movement. This order, insignificant in its beginning, but destined to exert a tremendous influence, was formed by the Essenes.

This order that excited the wonder even of the Greeks and the Romans, had its origin likewise in the great movement which sprang from the resistance to Syrian tryanny and to religious persecution. The Essenes were undoubtedly an offshoot of the Assideans for, like the latter, they observed the Sabbath with extraordinary rigor. They would not perform even their absolute necessities on that day. By the outward observances of the Levitical prescriptions they aimed to gain an inward sanctity, to deaden the passion, and to lead a consecrated life. But the Levitical laws of purity had reached such a point, by deductions and custom, that any contact with persons or things might interrupt that sanctity; and, in order to restore it, it would be necessary to perform certain prescribed ablutions and sometimes even to offer a sacrifice. Considerations of such a nature led the Essenes to associate only with men of a similar mind, and to unite with them in order to prevent any possibility of interference with their sanctified conditions. In this way they were forced to organize themselves into an Order, the main rule of which consisted in a scrupulous observance of the minutest regulations of Levitical

purity. Depending one on the other in this way, they found it advisable to eat their meals in common, thus avoiding the assistance of anyone less strict than themselves. As even the slightest contact with a woman might expose them every moment to Levitical impurity, the Essenes gradually came to despise, or at least, to avoid the marriage state. But how were they to preserve their punctilious purity in times of war? Not only the pagan enemy, but even the returning Judaean victor who became impure by coming in contact with a dead body in the course of the war might put their greatest precaution to naught. This embarrassment gave them the idea of retiring to some secluded region where they would be able to lead their own manner of life, undisturbed by the alarms of war and its consequences. They selected for their quarters the wilderness to the west of the Dead Sea, in the oasis of En-gedi. The dates growing in that region could furnish them with part of their nourishment, since their needs were but few.

Thus, out of the striking and peculiar views held by Essenes, there developed the institutions of communal meals and celibacy. Communal living led the Essenes also to the renunciation of their property. Of what use could private property be to a member of the Order? Each member turned his property over to the common fund that supplied the necessaries of life for all the members. Hence the origin of the maxim: "The Hassid (Essene) says: 'What is mine is thine and thine is thine.'" There was therefore neither poor nor rich among them; and this freedom from all care enabled them to give their religious predilection full scope, and their thoughts wandered farther and farther away from things earthly into the realm of dreams and ideals. The Essenes were also distinguished by

other pecularities. They always wore white linen garments; and each one carried with him, like the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness, a small shovel to enable him to cover up with earth the impurities of the body. They also wore a sort of leather apron, or towel, with which to dry themselves after washing. Each morning they bathed in fresh spring water, like the priests before officiating in the temple, to remove even any unsuspected uncleanliness from the body. From this daily bathing they were called "morning baptizers." The name Essenes signifies the same thing, and is derived from the Chaldaean word for bathers or baptists.*

These externalities, however, were only preparatory steps to the acquisition of inward piety, and of intimate, mystical communion with God. The Essenes were further distinguished by their aversion to the taking of an oath, by their frequent praying, and by their occupation with a sort of occult studies. They spoke no profane word before their prayers, and, after reciting the Shema at the first dawn of morning, they would gather in silent devotion for the prayer proper which was a free outpouring of the soul. They regarded their meals as a sort of sacrificial offering, in the course of which no unholy word was to be spoken. For the most part they maintained silence during the meals. Such silence must have made all the deeper impression upon the uninitiated, for the reason that the true character of this secluded Order remained hidden from its contemporaries, and was looked upon as something awe-inspiring and mysterious.

It certainly was not the original intention of the Essenes to absorb themselves in a sort of occul-

* Sacha, in Chaldaean, means bathing; hence, Asschai, pronounced Assai, bathers; Greek, Essaioi.

tism; but their asceticism, the quietude of their life, the freedom from family care, and their religious reveries, gradually led them to seek in Judaism different truths from those conveyed by the sober sense. The name of God, above all, seems to have furnished them food for deep contemplation; and the solemn dread of pronouncing the tetragrammaton (IHWH) challenged their attention to it to a certain extent. If that name was so sacred, its very letters must contain something mysterious, and the Essenes who had plenty of leisure speculated upon that mystery. The name of God was so sacred to them that they refused to make an oath which involved its mention, and testified merely by a yea or no. With the mystery connected with the name of God was closely associated the meaning of the names of angels. Because they had severed all relations with the affairs of state and of every day life, the Essenes transformed into an obscure and extravagant mysticism the teachings of Judaism that rested upon the practical national welfare. The awful veneration in which they held the prophet, and law giver Moses, was altogether foreign to the spirit of Judaism. The memory of Moses was cherished by all Judaeans, in and out of Palestine; the Essenes, however, strained their veneration almost to the point of deification. Whoever blasphemed the name of Moses was, from their point of view, as much deserving of death as he who blasphemed the name of God.

The ultimate aim of the Essenes was undoubtedly the striving after prophetic ecstasy, in order to become worthy of the Holy Spirit. In their rigorous mode of life they believed to have found the means of re-awakening the heavenly echo that had been hushed so long. Should this aim once be achieved, if prophecy stream forth again, if men and youths

behold heavenly visions once more, and, in their ecstasy, are again able to lift the veil of the future then will the Messianic kingdom be near at hand, the kingdom of heaven will aproach, and sin, sorrow, and trouble will be no more.

The Essenes were regarded by the people as holy men, and were admired and wondered at as workers of miracles. Some acquired a reputation of possessing the ability to foretell the future and to interpret dreams. Among the ignorant classes, the Essenes were regarded with awe and veneration because they occupied themselves with the miraculous cures of so-called possessed souls. Still they exerted no influence whatever upon political events; their number was small, not exceeding four thousand members even in the heyday of the Order. Since, as celibates, there was no possibility of a natural redintegration of their membership, and they were thus exposed to the danger of extinction, they resorted to the gaining of novices, and the making of proselytes. The novices were initiated with a certain ceremonial solemnity, and were given the white garb, the leather apron, and the shovel, the symbols of Essenism. The novices, however, were not admitted into the community of the Order, but were gradually subjected to an ever stricter continence and to an ever more rigorous observance of the laws of purity. Upon his final acceptance, the initiate had to make solemn oath to follow the Essenian mode of life, to preserve scrupulously the mystic teachings of the Order, and to transmit them faithfully. Those who proved themselves unworthy were expelled.

In the time of Hyrcan there was as yet no harsh antagonism between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Hyrcan employed members of both parties, according to their ability: the Sadducees, as warriors and diplomats, and the Pharisees as teachers

of the Law, judges, and administrators of internal affairs. The ones honored in the person of Hyrcan the head of the state and the commander-in-chief, the others the zealous high priest. As a matter of fact, in his personal conduct and in the internal administration of the state Hyrcan showed himself a zealous high priest and a guardian and promoter of Pharisaic Judaism. On the other hand, Hyrcan, as prince, did not care to offend the Sadducees, since they were his fellow soldiers, his generals and advisers. Jonathan, their leader, was an intimate friend of Hyrcan. Hyrcan succeeded for a long time in solving the difficult problem of preserving a mutual tolerance between the two parties whose relations were becoming strained. He managed to prevent one party from gaining the upper hand over the other, a supremacy which would make it possible for the one to persecute the other. However, as it often happens under such difficult circumstances, a single word, a single breath might upset the best calculations, and might ruin in one day the structure that had been reared with the efforts of many years. Such a thoughtlessly spoken word transformed the most zealous adherent of Pharisaism into its bitterest opponent.

The occasion for this change of attitude which brought untold woe upon Judaea was very petty in comparison with the consequences involved. Hyrcan had returned from a glorious victory over the many nationalities in the northeastern part of Peraea. Elated at the success of his arms and at the flourishing internal condition of Judaea, he prepared a feast to which he invited the leaders of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees without distinction. Food was served on golden tables; the richly decorated rooms contained also, among other things, desert plants in memory of the days of op-

pression under Syria. In the midst of the general gayety Hyrcan suddenly asked the Pharisees if, to their knowledge, he had ever done anything in violation of the law, and if so, to state it frankly. Possibly this challenging humility was a shrewd scheme on his part to ascertain the real feelings of the Pharisees towards him; his Sadducaean friends may have given him cause to suspect the loyalty of the Pharisees, and may have advised him to make sure of it. At any rate, no sooner was this challenge made when a certain Eleazar ben Poira arose and told Hyrcan bluntly that he should content himself with the princely crown, and resign his high-priestly office into worthier hands because his mother, before Hyrcan's birth, had been taken captive by the Syrians in an attack on Modin, and according to the law, the son of a captive woman is inelligible to the priesthood, let alone to the high-priesthood. Though Hyrcan was hurt at this insult he controlled himself sufficiently to agree to have the matter investigated. The investigation, however, disclosed that there was not the least foundation in fact to that report. The Sadducees, and especially their leader Jonathan, endeavored to convince Hyrcan that the story was concocted by the Pharisees to humiliate him in the eyes of the people, and sought to arouse Hyrcan's anger against them. To gain further assurance on this point, Hyrcan demanded that the leaders of the Pharisees punish the slanderer in accordance with the severity of the law, and expected that the punishment would correspond in severity to the high position of the victim of the slander. The Pharisees, however, knew no law of *lese-majesty,* and the judges ordered the culprit punished with the ordinary legal penalty of thirty-nine stripes. Jonathan took advantage of this incident, cited it as a conclusive proof that the Pharisees were showing a lack of

respect for Hyrcan's princely dignity, and succeeded in persuading Hyrcan to leave the Pharisees and to join the Sadducees. Hyrcan removed all Pharisees from their high offices in the administration of the government as well as in that of the temple, the High Court, and other courts of justice, and appointed Sadducees in their stead. But this coup de main led to sad consequences. Its first effect was to fill the Pharisees and the nation that stood behind them with hatred to the Asmonean house. A single act sufficed to dim the luster of the Asmonean glory. Hyrcan did not live long after this occurrence. He died in the thirty-first year of his reign, at the age of sixty (106 B. C. E.), and left five sons behind him: Aristobulus, Antigonus, Alexander, Absalom, and another whose name is unknown. Hyrcan resembled his prototype Solomon also in this that after his death an inevitable, hopeless division took place within the nation.

CHAPTER III

HYRCAN'S SUCCESSORS: ARISTOBULUS I, JANNAI ALEXANDER, AND SALOME ALEXANDRA (106-69 B. C. E.)

Before he died, John Hyrcan appointed his wife as queen and regent over Judaea, and his eldest son Judas as high priest. Judas was also known by the Greek name of Aristobulus; he, like his brothers and successors, bore a Greek name in addition to his Hebrew name.

It soon became evident, however, that the Macedonian custom of placing women at the head of the state had not, as yet, taken root in Judaea. Aristobulus removed his mother from the regency without exciting any opposition, and combined both offices in his own person. He also assumed the title of king, but this title enhanced neither his power nor his authority; it rather created discontent among the people who have always associated the kingship with the house of David from whom the true Messiah and redeemer was expected to issue. Upon the coins of his printing that have been found, the title of king does not appear; they contain the inscription: "The High priest Judah and the commonwealth of the Judaeans." (יהודה הכהן הגדול וחבר היהודים), and the same emblem as that

adopted by his father, a cornucopia. But that symbol did not represent the reality any longer. The seeds of discord sown by Hyrcan bore ominous fruit under his successors, and poisoned the well-being of the nation. In vain did the succeeding rulers endeavor to enhance their princely power; in vain did they surround themselves with a guard of loyal mercenaries, and perform splendid deeds of arms. The breach was beyond repair, and all their attempts to heal it only tended to widen it.

King Aristobulus not only removed his mother from power, but also cast her into prison with three of his brothers. His mother died there. Only his brother Antigonus, his comrade in arms whom he loved dearly, was permitted to participate in the government. Though but meager and incoherent reports concerning Aristobulus have been preserved owing to the shortness of his reign, it may be inferred from them that, like his father in his latter years, he was a close adherent of the Sadducees, and kept the Pharisees from any position of influence. He had but few friends in his household, and seemed to have been disliked by the people also. The fact that he had Greek predilections for which he received the designation of "Friend of the Hellenes" (Philhellene), a title highly honored by the Greeks, was alone sufficient to render him odious in the eyes of the dominant party, the Pharisees. The popular aversion to him seems to have been so great that all his motives were suspected, and all sorts of evil things were imputed to him. While the Greeks described him as just and modest, his Judaean critics regarded him as cruel and heartless. His mother died while in prison, probably from natural causes owing to old age; popular suspicion spread the report that he had starved his mother to death. His favorite brother Antigonus was treacherously assassinated, presum-

ably by enemies of the Asmonean house; rumor, however, held the king responsible for the murder because he was jealous of his brother.

Aristobulus inherited both his father's military energy and his plans to extend the boundaries of Judaea in the northeast. The stretch of territory from the foot of the southern spur of Mount Hermon eastward to the rich and fertile fields of Damascus was traversed by the Iturians and the Trachonites, and Aristobulus determined to dispossess them. His brother Antigonus, who, like himself, gained his first laurels in the war with the Samaritans and Syrians, joined him. Aristobulus was successful, extended the boundaries of Judaea in that direction, and adopted his father's policy of forcing the conquered peoples to accept Judaism. But, attacked by a serious disease, Aristobulus had to discontinue his conquests and return to Jerusalem. Antigonus continued the war for a while with success. However, upon the approach of the festive month of Tishri, he, too, returned to Jerusalem. Neither he nor his brother was fated to return to the scene of war. Antigonus was treacherously assassinated, and Aristobulus succumbed to his disease after a reign of one year (106-105 B. C. E.).

His successor was his younger brother Jonathan, shortened to Jannai, bearing the Greek name of Alexander, who was married to a sister of the Pharisee Simon ben Shetah by the name of Salome, changed later to the Greek name Alexandra. At the beginning of his reign, the young king (he was twenty-three years old) must have been intent upon gaining popularity, for the Pharisees came into favor again to a certain extent, and Simon ben Shetah, who is praised as the restorer of Pharisaism, became a familiar at court. Alexander Jannai was of a warlike disposition like all the Asmoneans,

but he possessed neither the military talents of his ancestors, nor their prudence. He consequently frittered away the national strength, and brought the nation to the brink of an abyss more than once. The twenty-seven years of his reign (105-79) were spent in foreign and domestic wars, and did not contribute to the welfare of the nation. However, his luck which was greater than his prudence did not desert him even in the midst of desperate circumstances which he provoked himself; and it was by sheer luck that he succeeded, on the whole, in enlarging the boundaries of Judaea. Like his father, he conducted his wars with mercenaries hired from among the Pisidians and Cilicians. He did not dare employ Syrians, for the mutual antipathy between the Judaeans and the Syrians was too deeply rooted to make united action possible between them.

Alexander centred his attention upon the cities of the Mediterranean that had declared their independence in the course of the wars between the half-brothers Antiochus Grypus and Cyzicenus. He was especially desirous of annexing to Judaea the populous city of Ptolemais (Acco) which was provided with an excellent harbor and included Judaeans in its population. The inhabitants of Ptolemais turned for assistance to the Egyptian prince, Ptolemy Lathyrus, who had taken possession of Cyprus in an open war against his mother Cleopatra. Lathyrus was glad to embrace this opportunity which would increase his power, and enable him to draw nearer to Egypt, and he hastened to throw himself on the Judaean coast with thirty thousand men. He defeated the Judaean army on a Sabbath. Many thousands of Alexander's soldiers fell on the battle field, many were taken captives, and the rest fled. Lathyrus traversed a portion of Judaea, murdering men,

women and children. He wanted to avenge himself not only on Alexander but on the Judaeans in general because their coreligionists of Egypt had been his opponents. This serious defeat would inevitably have reduced Judaea to the most humiliating servitude, had not Cleopatra, apprehensive of the increasing power of her son, deprived Lathyrus of the fruits of his victory before he could turn them to account aaginst herself. She sent a strong army to Judaea and Syria under the command of the two Judaean generals, Hilkiah and Ananias, the two sons of Onias to whom Queen Cleopatra owed her crown. Hilkiah died in the course of the expedition against Lathyrus, and his brother filled his place both in the council and in the army. Ananias's great influence stood Judaea in good stead at that time. Several of Cleopatra's advisers suggested to her that she take advantage of Judaea's present helplessness to dethrone Alexander, and to annex that country to Egypt. But Ananias indignantly opposed that suggestion. He advanced the argument that all the Judaeans of Egypt who had supported the Queen against the attempts of her son to deprive her of her crown, would go over to her enemy in case she made a treacherous attack upon the independence of the Judaean nation. His words conveyed also the threat that he himself with all the weight of his political acumen and military talent would cease to serve her or declare himself against her. Ananias's words did not fail to have the desired effect upon the Queen. She rejected the malicious advice, and formed an offensive and defensive alliance with Alexander (about 98 B. C. E.).

In the first nine years of his reign, exposed to danger and involved in painful entanglements, Alexander took no active part in the conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and seems

to have remained neutral. His wife Salome who was a warm adherent of the Pharisees may have been largely responsible for this peaceful attitude of the king. Alexander seems to have employed Simon, the queen's brother, as mediator between the still neglected Pharisees and the Sadducees who were in possession of the offices. But Alexander's neutral position towards the contending parties continued only so long as his endangered situation detracted his attention from the internal affairs of Judaea. When he returned as a victor and as a conqueror of many cities, and regarded himself with inflated conceit as an absolute lord and master, he changed his attitude. Whether the influence which the Pharisees acquired again stood in the way of his own power; whether he wished to attach the military caste of the Sadducees to himself, or whether his favorite, the Sadducee Diogenes, succeeded in winning him over to that party, suffice it that he appeared all of a sudden as an outspoken opponent of the Pharisaic teachings, and made his opposition public in an insulting manner. When he officiated as high priest on the Feast of Booths, he was to pour upon the altar the water contained in a silver bowl, as a symbol of fertility, in accordance with an old Pharisaic custom. To render this Pharisaic custom ridiculous, he purposely poured the water before his feet, instead of upon the altar. This was enough to excite against him the ill-will of the multitude assembled in the temple court. With reckless indignation the people threw the festival fruits (Ethrog) which they held in their hands at the heretical king, and denounced him as unworthy of the high-priesthood. This incident might have cost Alexander his life, were it not for the Pisidian and Cilician mercenaries, apparently held in readiness for just such an emergency, who hastened to the king's assistance and fell upon the

people with drawn swords. Six thousand men fell dead in the temple. To prevent a similar occurrence in the future, Alexander had a barrier built between the people's court and that of the priests, so as to keep the people from approaching the altar. These incidents produced an irreconcilable hatred between the king and the Pharisees. The division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel under Rehoboam and Jeroboam repeated itself in the bitter party division of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

But Alexander did not see the breach in the structure of the state his own hands had made in his blindness; he still cherished lofty schemes of conquest in order to extend the boundaries of the country. He directed his enterprises against the country east of the Jordan that still bore the name of Moabitis, and against the southeastern regions of the Sea of Tiberias called Galaditis, and also Gaulanitis. But as he was about to proceed upon his conquests, the Nabatean king Obeda (or Oboda) threw himself in his way, decoyed him into a pathless region torn by ravines, and administered such a complete defeat upon his army that Alexander barely escaped with his life to Jerusalem. In the capital he was greeted by the violent hatred of the Pharisees who incited the people against him to the point of rebellion. Six years of bloody riots and bloody wars followed (94-89 B. C. E.). Alexander succeeded in suppressing each uprising with the help of his mercenaries, but the massacres that occurred on the occasion of each suppression gave rise to new uprisings. Alexander was finally so worn out by these conflicts that he extended the hand of peace to the Pharisees. But the Pharisees, in their blind fury, rejected his proposals of peace, and insisted that the first condition for an enduring peace was the king's death. They even opened traitorous communication with the

then king of Syria, Demetrius Eucarus, to send a Syrian army against Judaea. Alexander proceeded to oppose him at Shechem; and in the bloody battle that followed on Samaritan soil, Judaean fought against Judaean and Greek against Greek, since both armies remained loyal to their chiefs. The battle turned out in favor of Eucarus. Through the loss of all his mercenaries, Alexander was compelled to wander a fugitive in the mountains of Ephraim.

His sad plight excited the sympathy of the people for him;—six thousand of his Pharisaic opponents deserted the Syrian army and went over to Alexander as a result of which Eucarus was compelled to leave Judaea. Some implacable Pharisees, however, continued the struggle against their enemy. Defeated in an engagement, they threw themselves into the fortress of Bethome, but were forced to surrender. Alexander, carried away by his desire for vengeance, and goaded on by his Sadducean favorite Diogenes, had eight hundred captured Pharisees crucified in one day! Later on this was exaggerated to the effect that he had ordered the execution of the wives and children of the captives who had been condemned to death, and that he had witnessed the spectacle while banqueting in the company of lewd women. But this extravagance of cruelty was not necessary in order to stigmatize him with the epithet of "Thracian." The crucifixion of eight hundred men sufficed to condemn him as a heartless butcher of men, and the Sadducees paid dearly for it. Fifty thousand men perished on both sides in the course of the six years of civil war. The Pharisees suffered most during that time, and did not consider themselves safe in the country. In the night following the crucifixion of the eight hundred, eight thousand Pharisees fled from Judaea, some to Syria and others to Egypt.

Despite his many reverses, Alexander succeeded in enlarging the boundaries of Judaea by the acquisition of a number of provinces and cities; west of the Jordan, from Raphia in the south to Mount Carmel in the north, and east of the Jordan from Seleucia in the north to Zoar, the City of Palms, to the south of the Dead Sea. To make sure of his conquests, he erected the fortress of Alexandrion, not far from the Jordan, on the mountain height of Sartaba (Pretty View) in a fertile wine region; and, east of the Dead Sea, he built the stronghold of Macharus on a high and favorable position, protected on all sides by deep ravines. These two mountain fortresses, together with the fortress of Hyrcanion which his father had built in the west, were regarded as impregnable.

As Alexander ruled also over cities that included Greek inhabitants, he was the first Judaean prince to stamp coins with a Greek inscription on one side, and a Hebrew inscription on the other. Both designate him as king. He used the cornucopia and the anchor as symbols, the anchor signifying his dominion over the cities situated on the sea. The coins he had stamped before he made his considerable conquests contained only the Hebrew inscription: "Jonathan the High Priest and the Commonwealth of the Judaeans." (יוחנן הכהן הגדול וחבר היהודים).

After an absence of three years on his east-Jordanic expeditions, Alexander returned to Jerusalem, and was hailed as victor by the people. His achievements made the people forget his misdeeds to some extent. Though suffering from quartan fever, he nevertheless undertook, in the last year of his reign, another expedition against the uncaptured strongholds in the region east of the Jordan. At the siege of the fortress of Ragaba, his illness took such a serious turn that he prepared himself for death. The solemnity of the last

hour made him see his deeds in a different light. He realized, perhaps with horror, how unwisely and unjustly he had acted in persecuting the Pharisees and thereby incurring the ill-will of the people. He therefore urged upon the Queen whom he had appointed regent, and who was deeply solicitous for the future of her sons, to adhere closely to the Pharisees, to surround herself with advisers who belonged to that party, and to undertake nothing without their consent. He also enjoined upon the queen to hide his death from the soldiery until the fall of the fortress, and then to turn his body over to the Pharisees to satisfy their vengeance upon it or to give it an honored burial according to their pleasure. He is said to have quieted the queen's anxiety over the mutual hatred of the parties with these words: "Fear neither the true Pharisee nor his sincere opponent, but beware of the hypocrites (the painted) of both parties who act like the lecherous Zimri, and expect to be rewarded like the zealous Phinehas."

The Pharisees ungenerously placed the day of his death on the calendar of the memorable days of joy. Through his misdeeds, he reflected odium not only upon himself, but upon the entire Asmonean family. Henceforth, in fixing the date upon a public document with the formula "in the year of the High priest," its sequel "of the Most High God," hitherto forming part of the formula, was omitted.

It was fortunate for the Judaean nation that a kind-hearted and sincerely pious woman succeeded to the helm of the state after the impetuosity of a man had torn it to pieces. She had the effect of balm upon burning wounds. Her reign made it possible for the two parties to calm their excited passions and bloody hatred, and to rise above the cramping party interests to the furtherance of the common national welfare. Though Queen Salome,

with the reigning name of Alexandra, was devoted with all her heart to Pharisaism, and left the internal administration in the hands of its adherents, she was far from displaying any intolerance to the opposition party. The respect she enjoyed impressed itself so forcibly upon the neighboring princes that they dared undertake no war against her; and her prudence kept away from the borders of Judaea a mighty conqueror who had overwhelmed Syria. Heaven itself smiled upon her reign, and blessed the country with unusual fertility in the nine years of her administration. People preserved for a long time the astonishingly large grains of wheat which the fields of Judaea yielded at that time. Alexandra also had coins of her own stamped with the same design as her predecessor, and with the Greek inscription "Queen Alexandra."

Alexandra appointed as high priest her eldest son Hyrcan, a weakling rich in private virtues but devoid of all insight into public affairs. As she was devoted to the Pharisees, and as their chief, Simon ben Shetah, was her brother, and self-evidently exerted a great influence upon her, she inaugurated her reign by setting at liberty all the Pharisees who had been incarcerated by her husband and by encouraging the fugitives to return home. So deep was the impression made by her brother upon the history of this time, that the Pharisees coupled his name with that of the queen in designating this period, styling it "the days of Simon ben Shetah and of Queen Alexandra." The Sadducees gave up their places in the Sanhedrin voluntarily or under pressure; and ben Shetah became the president of the Council of Seventy, a position formerly held by the high priests. Upon his advice, the great teacher Judah ben Tabbai who had fled to Alexandria from Alexander's persecution was recalled

to Jerusalem. But as the Alexandrian community desired to retain him there, a flattering letter was addressed to that community as though Jerusalem were pleading for the return of her exiled husband: "From me, Jerusalem, the Holy City, to thee, Alexandria; my husband sojourneth in thy midst, and I am forsaken." Judah ben Tabbai was made Nassi of the restored Pharisaic High Court, and cooperated with Simon ben Shetah.

They commenced their activity by purging the laws from all Sadducean traces. The penal code which the Sadduceans introduced as complementing the penal laws of the Pentateuch was abolished, and the rules handed down by tradition were put into force again. The people had little cause to complain of this change, because, as intimated above, the Sadducean penal code was hated on account of its severity. Every day on which a Sadducean law was abolished was declared a semi-holiday.

A wider scope was given to the legal procedures in cases involving capital punishment. Witnesses were to be examined not only with reference to the place and the time of the commission of the crime, but also with reference to all the circumstances closely connected with the crime, so that the judges would be placed in a better position to decide upon the question under investigation and would be able to catch the witnesses in contradictions. This principle was directed especially against denunciations which could not be wanting in a period when the position of victor and victim changed so often. Simon impressed upon the judges the necessity of proceeding most circumstantially in the examination of witnesses, and of exercising the utmost care in the interrogations put to them so as to give them no opportunity of coloring false testimony by suggestions implied in the judge's questions. To

emphasize the necessity of a circumstantial examination of witnesses, the pretty story of Susanna was composed, probably in Hebrew. Two lecherous men who had raised lustful eyes upon the beautiful, chaste Susanna, the wife of a prominent Judaean by the name of Joiakim, and who had been repelled by her, appeared as accusers against her, and maintained that they had witnessed in her garden an act of adultery on her part with a young man. The judges were about to impose the death penalty upon her in the presence of all the people, when the wise Daniel arose and asked the witnesses to point out under what tree of the garden the act of adultery was committed. As the witnesses contradicted each other on this point, the people realized the falsity of their statements; they were visited by the very punishment they had designed against the chaste Susanna, and the shedding of innocent blood was averted.

Ben Shetah and Ben Tabbai, as members of the Sanhedrin, adopted effective measures against the frequency of divorces which were facilitated by the Sadducees in accordance with the literal provision of the Pentateuchal laws. Another ordinance of great importance introduced by these men was the one requiring every large city to maintain higher schools for the education of youths from sixteen years up. The curriculum was undoubtedly limited to the Sacred Scripture, with special reference to the Pentateuch and the oral law. The Sanhedrin, while thus providing for the future, did not overlook the greatly troubled present either, and endeavored to impress the Pharisaic tendencies upon it. They took special pains to revive among the people those laws that had become half forgotten or neglected in the course of the long domination of the Sadducees, from the latter days of Hyrcan to those of Alexandra. The leaders of the Pharisees made it

a special point to carry out with pomp and festivities the practical application of a disputed law when the occasion for it approached. The days on which such applications were made were celebrated annually as memorable days by the interdiction of public mourning and fasting. For this reason the ceremony of the pouring of water on the Feast of Booths which Alexander ridiculed in an insulting manner, was conducted amidst great jubilation, from which, in the course of time, there developed a unique popular festival of which it was later said: "Whoever did not see the joy on the occasion of the pouring of water never witnessed a joyous occasion in his life." On the nights of this festival the temple mount was so brightly illuminated that the whole city shone like a fiery sea, and night was turned into day. The entire population flocked to the temple mount to witness the spectacle or to participate in it. Amusement alternated with sacred songs. The psalms selected for this purpose were sung by full Levitical choirs to the accompaniment of the harps, viols and cymbals, on the fifteen steps that led from the woman's court to that of the laity. These fifteen "songs of the steps" (the Great song of Praise, Psalms 120-136), recalled to mind, for the most part, the return from the Babylonian exile and God's deliverance of His people. At its conclusion the Levitical choirs addressed the multitude assembled upon the mount:

> "O bless ye the Lord,
> All ye servants of the Lord,
> Who stand in the temple at night."
> (Ps. 134:1.)

To which the people responded in a psalm composed at that time:

"Sing unto the Lord; praise His name
For God hath chosen Jacob unto himself
Israel is become his possession,"

and at the conclusion:

"Even in our low estate remembered He us,
And hath redeemed us from our enemies,
For His mercy endureth forever."
(Ps. 135: 1, 3-4; 136: 23, 24-26.)

This joyous festival continued for six nights in succession.

A popular festival of a similar nature was the Feast of Wood, occurring on the fifteenth of Ab (August), which assumed the importance of a semi-holiday. On that occasion, great quantities of wood for the altar fires of the Temple were donated—an important gift in a country which was poor in timber. The day was celebrated particularly by young maidens with song and dance. A bevy of young girls, all dressed in white, used to gather in an open space in the vineyards, where they danced and sang strophic songs in the holy tongue. The male onlookers often utilized this opportunity for the selection of a bride. It is certain that this festival was likewise a protest against the Sadducees who did not recognize the custom of donating wood for the altar.

The Sanhedrin, under the leadership of Simon ben Shetah and Judah ben Tabbai, took advantage of the circumstances so favorable to the restored Pharisaism to pass an act that was calculated to arouse a feeling of a common nationalism, and to counteract the Sadducean views. The Sadducees had maintained that the cost of the daily sacrifice and the maintenance of the temple in general need not be defrayed from the national treasury, but

should be left to the generosity of the individual prompted by his piety. The Sahedrin under Salome Alexandra decided, however, that each Israelite, twenty years of age and over, including proselytes and manumitted slaves, should contribute to the temple treasury at least one-half a shekel (about 25 cents). This sacrificial tax was not considered a burden, but was paid voluntarily by all Judaeans of Palestine and of foreign countries. Three stated collections to be made at different times, were established for that purpose, that of Judaea in the spring. On the first of Adar (March), heralds announced throughout the country that the collection period was approaching, and the collection began on the fifteenth of the same month. The contributions from Egypt and Syria arrived at Pentecost, and those from more distant countries, Babylon, Media, Asia Minor, on the Feast of Booths. Because of their wealth, the foreign Judaeans contributed most generously, sending golden darics instead of the silver shekel or the silver and copper denarii. In every country where the Judaeans were well represented they established central bureaus to which the contributions were to be sent before they were forwarded to Jerusalem. Prominent men were selected for the purpose and were designated as "Holy Messengers." In Nisibis and Nahardea (Naarda) on the Euphrates, the two cities of Mesopotamia and Babylonia most largely inhabited by Judaeans, treasuries for the temple contributions were established, and the money was sent to Jerusalem under a strong guard as a protection against the marauding Parthians and Nabateans. The communities of Asia Minor that counted many men of wealth among their members, likewise had their central bureaus; Apamea and Laodicea in Phrygia, and Pergamum and Andramyttium in the territory of Aeolia. For twenty years after the introduc-

tion of the new ordinance, the contributions from that district alone amounted to two hundred pounds gold (about $41,250) annually. These three collections not only sufficed to defray the considerable expenditures for the maintenance of the temple, but also left a conspicuous surplus. The temple of Jerusalem gradually accumulated great wealth, and was often the object of envy and greed.

Thus far, the restoration of Pharisaism, brought about by Ben Shetah and Ben Tabbai, was of a harmless nature; it revived old laws, enacted new ones, and created the means by which these were to be impressed upon the memory and the minds of the people. But no reaction, it seems, can hold itself within moderate bounds, but leads to inevitable encroachments. Those Sadducees who refused to submit to the Pharisaic interpretations of the law were hailed before the courts and punished. The zeal to increase respect for the law, and to banish opposition assumed the character of bloody persecutions. The two chiefs of the Sanhedrin were, to be sure, men of pure character and of a kindly nature. A maxim of Judah ben Tabbai indicates his kindliness: "Regard the accused as guilty only so long as they stand before the court; when they depart, they must again be considered innocent." Nevertheless, these men became persecutors of the Sadducees. Ben Shetah was so hated by his opponents on account of his reckless severity, that they determined upon a scheme of vengeance that was to hurt him to the very soul. They put up two false witnesses to accuse his son of a capital offense as a result of which he was condemned to death. But on the way to the place of execution, the condemned man insisted upon his innocence in such a touching manner that the witnesses themselves were deeply moved by it, and confessed the falsity of their accusation. But when the judges

were about to set the condemned man at liberty, the victim himself called their attention to the illegality of their proceedings, since, according to the Pharisaic law, no credence could be put in witnesses who retract their former statements. Addressing his father, he said: "If thou desirest that the salvation of Israel come through thy hand, then regard me as a threshhold upon which one treads without regard." Both father and son proved themselves worthy of the great task of being guardians of the law; the one sacrificed his life, the other his paternal feelings for the preservation of the law.

The severity of the Pharisaic courts fell heavily upon the Sadducean leaders. First of all Diogenes, Alexander's favorite, and several others who had suggested or approved the execution of the eight hundred Pharisees, paid with their lives for it. Thus exposed to constant danger, the Sadducees turned to Aristobulus, Salome's second son, for protection. He embraced their cause warmly, and recommended them to the queen's favor. When the Sadducean leaders appeared before the queen, they reminded her of the services they had rendered her husband and of the dread which their name spread among the hostile neighbors of Judaea, and threatened to offer their services to the Nabatean or to the Syrian king. They prayed to be given any fortress in the country wherein they might withdraw as a matter of self-protection. The tenderhearted queen could not resist the tears of the men who had grown gray in the defense of the country, and appointed the most meritorious Sadducees as commanders of most of the fortresses of the interior. She did not, however, entrust to them the three most important strongholds: Macharus, Hyrcanion, and Alexandrion.

No political changes took place in Judaea during

the reign of Alexandra. Tigranes, king of Armenia, who had subdued nearly all of Syria, sought to bring under his control all the countries that had formerly formed part of the Syrian kingdom. His approach frightened Alexandra, not without reason, and she sought to avoid a conflict with him by means of friendly words and gifts. Tigranes received the Judaean ambassadors and gifts in a friendly manner, but would hardly have refrained from attacking Judaea had not the opposition on the part of Rome compelled him to raise the siege of Acco, and to look after the safety of his own country upon the advance of the Roman general Lucullus. For the time being Judaea was thus freed from the danger of the approach of a mighty conqueror. But other dangers and misfortunes soon set in that shook the country to its very foundations.

Alexandra fell critically ill, and this illness brought about the most unhappy complications. Anticipating that his brother, the weakling Hyrcan, was designated as Alexandra's successor, her impetuous and ambitious younger son, Aristobulus, immediately stole away from Jerusalem and proceeded to the Galilean fortress of Gabbata, in the proximity of Sepphoris, which was in charge of the Sadducean Galaistes upon whom he could count, and took possession of it. Within fifteen days twenty-one other fortresses were in his power, surrendered to him by their Sadducean governors. He then acquired a considerable army of mercenaries, hired from the small Syrian and east-Jordanic princes and from the marauding Trachonites. In vain did Hyrcan and the most prominent members of the Sanhedrin implore the queen to take some decisive step to avert a civil war. She pointed to the army, her treasure, and to the fortresses that still remained loyal, told them to take such steps for

the salvation of the country as they thought best, and occupied herself with the preparations for her death. She died soon after (69 B. C. E.) and left her country and people to the fury of civil war that was to destroy the independence purchased at such a heavy price. She had witnessed the happy days of her people's freedom, and, upon her death bed may have apprehended, with a grieving heart, the approaching night of servitude. She was the only queen in Judaean history who left an honored name to posterity; and she was the last independent ruler of Judaea.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST ASMONEAN KINGS
(69-37 B. C. E.)

When a nation is fated by Providence to destruction, nothing will hasten its doom so much as strife over the succession. The best energies of the nation are frittered away in such struggle, and it usually results in foreign subjugation which is all the more galling because, in such cases, the foreigner appears in the guise of a benefactor and a peacemaker.

The death of Queen Alexandra was the signal for the outbreak of the war between the brothers that divided the nation into two hostile camps. The dying queen turned the crown over to Hyrcan II, in accordance with the right of primogeniture. But Hyrcan was not at all adapted for the rulership. Though graced with the virtues that would have been considered noble in a private citizen, his weakness of character, his helplessness, and his lack of self-reliance would have made him but a mediocre ruler even in the days of tranquillity; in stormy days he was altogether unfit to rule and wrought more havoc by his goodness than another could have wrought by acts of tyranny. In strong anti-

thesis to him stood his younger brother, Aristobulus II, a man of impetuous courage carried even to the point of frenzy, a characteristic in which he resembled his father Alexander, and of unlimited ambition that never forsook him to his dying day and blinded him to the reality of things. He cherished the aim of becoming a powerful ruler of Judaea and of subjecting the neighboring countries to his sway; but his impetuosity overshot the mark, and, instead of glory, he heaped execration upon himself and upon the nation. No sooner had the queen closed her eyes and Hyrcan ascended the throne, than Aristobulus with his mercenaries and his Sadducean followers rushed upon Jerusalem to dethrone his brother. On Hyrcan's side stood the Pharisees, the people, and the mercenaries whom Alexandra had maintained. For greater security the followers of Hyrcan placed Aristobulus' wife and children in the Baris as hostages. The hostile brothers and their armies met at Jericho. Hyrcan lost the battle because the greater number of his mercenaries deserted to Aristobulus, and he fled to Jerusalem and locked himself in the Baris. Aristobulus laid siege to the temple wherein many of his opponents had taken refuge, and captured it. Having lost the temple and the city, Hyrcan surrendered. A compromise was effected by which it was agreed under solemn oath that Aristobulus was to be king and Hyrcan high priest. In this way Hyrcan was dethroned after a reign of three months. To cement this alliance further, Aristobulus' son Alexander married Hyrcan's daughter Alexandra.

Aristobulus instituted no changes in the internal affairs of the country. Though allied with the Sadducees and assisted to power by them, Aristobulus did not dare excite the ill-will of the people against himself by forcing Sadducean customs and

doctrines upon them. The antagonism between the two parties was far from spent, but it no longer led to the point of violent outbreaks. The flames of dissensions might have been extinguished altogether, were it not for the unlimited ambition and self-seeking of a certain man who fanned them into fury again.

This man who, together with his family, became the vampire that sucked the noblest blood out of Judaea, was Antipater, son of Antipas, a descendant of a prominent Idumean family which like all the Idumeans, was compelled by John Hyrcan to accept Judaism. Never was a misdeed punished so quickly and so thoroughly; the fanaticism of Hyrcan I was to bring ruin upon his house and upon his nation. Through his wealth and diplomatic ability, Antipater held the office of governor of Idumea under Alexander and Alexandra, and made himself popular, by gifts and favors, not only among his own tribesmen but also among the neighbors, the Nabateans and the inhabitants of Gaza and Ashkelon. Hyrcan II who, in his weakness, was ever in need of a guide, made Antipater his confidant, and the latter misused that confidence with the unscrupulousness of a favorite who utilizes his influence to his own advantage. He let no opportunity pass without reminding Hyrcan of his humiliation in permitting his younger brother to rob him, the legitimate heir, of his throne. By seductive means he succeeded in inducing the alarmed Hyrcan to violate his oath, and to agree to the scheme of calling upon a foreign power to arbitrate between himself and his brother. Antipater had skilfully made all arrangements in advance with Aretas Philhellene, king of the Nabateans; all that Hyrcan had to do was to remain passive. One night both fled from Jerusalem and, by circuitous paths, arrived at the Nabatean capital Petra, situ-

ated on a high mountain plateau. Aretas was ready to embrace the cause of Hyrcan, both because he had been previously won over by Antipater's gifts, and also because in case of victory, he intended to repossess himself of the twelve cities east and southwest of the Dead Sea which the Asmoneans had conquered after many struggles. Aretas marched upon Judaea with an army of fifty thousand, swelled by Hyrcan's partisans. Aristobulus went to meet the enemy but was defeated, and fell back upon Jerusalem (66 B. C. E.). The quietude Judaea had enjoyed for three years was thus broken for a long time by Antipater's ambitious machinations and Hyrcan's infinite folly.

Aretas began the siege of Jerusalem in the spring. To escape the horrible sights of another siege, many prominent Jerusalemites, presumably Pharisaic leaders also, fled from the city, most of them going to Egypt. The siege continued for several months, the strength of Jerusalem's wall compensating for the meagerness of Aristobulus' forces. But soon a famine set in, and, what was even worse from the point of view of the pious, there was a lack of sacrificial animals for the altar, especially for the approaching Passover. Aristobulus succeeded in inducing the Judaean besiegers to supply the necessary sacrificial animals at their own price. Each day baskets containing the money were lowered from the walls, and lambs were drawn up in return. But as the siege dragged on with no prospect of its termination, some shrewd adviser, possibly Antipater himself, suggested that the besiegers take advantage of the lack of sacrificial animals in Jerusalem to compel the surrender of the city. As a result, when the baskets were lowered from the wall one day, the partisans of Hyrcan are said to have placed a swine in the basket about to be drawn up. This insult to the sanc-

tuary filled the pious with consternation and made such a far-reaching impression that the Saenhdrin, later on, interdicted the breeding of swine altogether. Hyrcan's partisans committed another brutality also at that time. In a secluded spot near Jerusalem there lived a holy man, Onias, who was reputed to possess the power of influencing the heavens by his intercessions. Once, in a time of drought, he was said to have secured rains by his prayers. In the hallucination that the heavens would grant his request this time also, a number of soldiers from Hyrcan's camp sought him out in his retreat, and urged him to pronounce a curse upon Aristobulus and his adherents. But instead of cursing, the holy man, in a spirit of true ethical nobility, prayed: "Lord of the World! The besiegers and the besieged are both children of Thy people: I therefore, pray Thee to pay no heed to the imprecations of either the one or the other." The savage soldiers murdered him like a criminal.

In a short while, the beast "whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass, and his heart of flint; which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet" (Dan. 7:10), was to fall upon Judaea, to drink her blood, to eat her flesh, and to suck her marrow. The hour struck when the Roman eagle, with swift pinions, was to swoop down upon Israel's inheritance, to encircle the Judaean nation bleeding from many a wound, and to inflict new wounds upon her until she lay cold in death. Like Fate itself, Rome was then controlling the destinies of the north Asiatic nations, plundering, dismembering, annihilating. The same fate awaited Judaea. With surprising instinct, the bird of prey was attracted to its victim from afar, in order to devour it. The first time it appeared in the form of Scaurus, Pompey's legate, who, insignificant at home, had gone abroad to accumulate

wealth and fame. Finding Syria unsuited to his purpose because others had preceded him in plundering that country, Scaurus turned to Judaea, and the warring brothers greeted him as a messenger of salvation who was to relieve them from their embarrassments. Both sent embassadors to him and, knowing that the Romans were not unsusceptible to the glitter of gold, each one saw to it that his embassadors did not appear empty-handed before Scaurus. Aristobulus' gift overbalanced his brother's; he sent four hundred talents, while Hyrcan, or rather Antipater, offered promises only. Moreover, the interests of Rome were not in conflict with Scaurus' greed this time. The king of the Nabateans who already possessed considerable power must not be permitted by Rome to increase his power still further by interfering in the civil war of Judaea. Scaurus therefore ordered Aretas to raise the siege of Jerusalem at once, and threatened him with the anger of Rome in case of a refusal. Aretas obeyed submissively and withdrew his army. Aristobulus, freed from the siege, pursued him and inflicted considerable loss upon him (65 B. C. E.). For the moment Aristobulus could indulge in the delusion that he was really the victorious king of Judaea. The sure course of the Roman policy, and the slow and deliberate tactics employed by Pompey against Mithridates encouraged him in the false impression that his rule over Judaea was permanent. Warlike like his father, he made incursions into neighboring territories and even maintained privateers on the sea. Aristobulus remained two years in this self-deception and struck coins at that time as a sign of his independence.

But Antipater's resourceful mind soon found means of disturbing his imagined security. Where bribery and diplomatic tricks were concerned, Antipater was Aristobulus' master. Antipater man-

aged to gain the support of Scaurus for Hyrcan, and to obtain his promises to intercede with Pompey who was gathering laurels in Syria in Hyrcan's behalf. The war between the brothers was a welcome opportunity for Pompey to add another subjected people to his list of conquests, and thereby enhance his triumph in Rome. Aristobulus presented him with a costly and beautiful work of art, a golden vine with golden leaves and a cluster of golden grapes, valued at five hundred talents, which King Alexander had ordered, probably as an ornament for the Temple. Pompey accepted this rich gift and hastened to send it to Rome, as an earnest of his triumph. This, however, did not induce him to decide in favor of its donor. With characteristic Roman arrogance, he ordered the antagonists to appear in person before him at Damascus, where he would investigate the situation and give his decision. Though deeply humiliated, both brothers appeared before him and pleaded their cases eloquently; the one referred to his right of primogeniture, the other to his greater capability. A third party also appeared before Pompey that represented the rights of the nation in contradistinction to those of the warring princes. A republican party was organized which, weary of Asmonean quarrels, desired that the commonwealth be governed only by its legal constitution, without any hereditary chief. The republicans complained especially that the latter Asmoneans had changed the constitution of the Judaean state, and had transformed the high-priesthood into a monarchy in order to enslave the people.

Pompey who was determined upon bringing Judaea under the Roman yoke, knew that the weakling Hyrcan would serve his purpose better than the energetic Aristobulus and accordingly decided in favor of the former. Aristobulus realized

Pompey's ultimate design, and hastened to the fortress of Alexandrion to block the Roman's road to Judaea. Recognizing the hopelessness of a war with the Romans, Aristobulus finally surrendered the fortress, and agreed to surrender Jerusalem also. Pompey sent the tribune Sabinius to go with Aristobulus to Jerusalem to take possession of the city and its treasures. The people of Jerusalem, however, after admitting Aristobulus, shut the gates in the face of the Romans.

And thus, within a space of three years, Jerusalem had to sustain another siege. Pompey approached Jerusalem, and the city gates were opened to him by the partisans of Hyrcan and the peace-loving element of the population. The patriots, however, withdrew to the temple mount, destroyed the bridges, and defended themselves with astounding determination. Against his will, Pompey was compelled to lay siege to the temple mount. As the Romans had to bring their siege machines from Tyre, and to haul wood for filling in the crevices in the north side of the temple mount from distant forests, the siege dragged on and might have continued longer had not the besieged themselves played into the hands of the Romans on account of their over-scrupulous observance of the Sabbath. By an interpretation of the Law, the besieged were permitted to resist an attack on their persons, but not on the walls. As soon as the Romans noticed this distinction, they took advantage of it and confined themselves each Sabbath day to an attack on the walls until, one Sabbath (in Sivan, June, 63 B. C. E.) they succeeded in overtoppling one of the temple towers and in making a breach in the wall through which the boldest Romans fought they way into the temple. The legions and the troops of the Roman allies rushed into the court, murdering the priests who did not cease their sacred ministrations

for a moment but looked death calmly in the face. Some of the priests threw themselves from the pinnacles into the abyss below, and others set fire to piles of wood and leaped into the flames. Twelve thousand Judaeans perished that day. Pompey, on this occasion, penetrated into the Holy of Holies in order to satisfy his curiosity as to the character of the Judaean worship concerning which contradictory reports were circulated among the pagans; and he was not a little astonished to find there neither the image of an ass nor any other visible representation of the divinity. The calamity that had befallen the temple thus redounded to the benefit of Judaism, since Pompey's visit had shattered the pagan prejudices and inventions circulated against Judaism by Antiochus Epiphanes and by malicious Alexandrian writers. Whether the imageless nobility of the temple made a deep impression of awe upon Pompey, or whether he was cautious to avoid the charge of temple robbery on the part of his enemies, it is a remarkable fact that Pompey suppressed his greed and left intact the temple treasury which contained not less than two thousand talents of gold (about $30,000,000). It was due to the accident that the Roman conqueror of Jerusalem was not a degenerate that the temple was not completely destroyed and that Judaea was allowed to retain a semblance of independence. Real independence ended forever with this hour. Just a century after the Maccabeans had overpowered the tyranny of Syria, their descendants placed Judaea under the tyranny of Rome.

And what did Hyrcan gain by calling in the Roman arbiter? Pompey deprived him of the royal title, left him only the high-priesthood and the ambiguous title of Prince of the People (Ethnarch), and placed him under the tutelage of Antipater, who was appointed procurator. Pompey had to

leave Hyrcan a certain degree of power and a title in order to calm the indignation of the patriots against the Roman subjugation; for when they heard of the conquest of Jerusalem, an armed multitude from the country towns streamed into Jerusalem to protest, weapon in hand, against the indignities heaped upon their country. The walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and Judaea was regarded as a conquered land, though it was not formally incorporated into the Roman empire as a Roman province. After an exemption of a hundred years Jerusalem and all Judaea had again to pay tribute to a foreign, hostile power.

Wherein did this tribute consist? Did the victor, in Roman fashion, declare all the fields, vineyards, and pasturages as forfeit to the state, and leave their owners in possession merely as tenants for which they were required to deliver to the Romans a portion of their crops as rental? Or, were the estates of the patriots who had died in defending their country against the Romans, and of those who had been made captive leased to foreign tenants? The Roman greed for land and property was hard to satisfy. In addition, the boundaries of Judaea were reduced to the limits it occupied in pre-Asmonean days. All the cities of the sea and on the coast that were occupied by Greeks, Pompey declared free cities, and turned them over to their inhabitants. This was true also of many interior and east-Jordanic cities which Hyrcan and Alexander had incorporated into Judaea after many hard struggles. Samaria, Scythopolis (Bethshean), and other cities in the Plain of Jezreel, and Gadara, Hippos, Pella, Dion (Diopolis), Philadelphia and others were torn away from Judaea, partly converted into free cities, and placed under the dominion of the Roman governor of Syria. Most of these cities date their liberty from the time

of Pompey, the conqueror of Jerusalem. Ten east-Jordanic cities, called Decapolis, formed a union for mutual protection. The most ardent patriots among the captives were executed by Pompey's orders, and the rest were led to Rome. The captive princes, Aristobulus, his son Antigonus, his two daughters, and his uncle Absalom, were compelled, among other royal captives of Asia, to grace Pompey's triumph in Rome. While Zion covered her head in mourning, Rome reveled in the triumphant joy of victory. But the Judaean captives who were dragged to Rome laid the foundation of a community that was to resume the struggle against Rome in a different form and, in a sense, to conquer the mighty empire.

There is no doubt that, even before Pompey's intervention in Judaea, there were Judaeans living in Rome and in other Italian cities whither they had come from Egypt and Asia Minor in the course of their commercial enterprises. The first Judaeans of Rome were not captives, but merchants who had come in contact with the Roman nobles through the export of grain from Egypt, and through the farming of taxes in Asia Minor. But these immigrants, owing to the absence of religious teachers among them, could hardly have formed a regular community. But among the captives led by Pompey to Rome there were certainly many men who were familiar with the Law. These were ransomed by their wealthier coreligionists and were induced to settle in Rome permanently. In the course of time, the children of these captives received the title of freedmen (Libertini) in accordance with the Roman Law. The Judaean quarter of Rome was located on the right shore of the Tiber, on the slope of the Vatican Hill. Theodos, one of the Judaeans who settled in Rome, introduced in the Roman community the custom of eating a roasted kid on the

night of the Passover, in remembrance of the paschal lamb which was not to be eaten outside of Jerusalem, and which the exiled sadly missed as a cherished habit. The Jerusalemites were dissatisfied with this innovation because, to them, it appeared like the introduction of sacrifices on foreign soil. They sent a missive of protest to Theodos with these words: "Hadst thou not been Theodos, we had surely pronounced the ban against thee."

The Judaeans of Rome did not fail to exert a certain influence upon the course of the political events of Rome. As the earlier settlers as well as the ransomed captives enjoyed the right of voting in the popular assemblies, their unanimity, in acting upon a prearranged plan, and their activity sometimes gave them the balance of power in popular decisions. So important was their tacit influence, that when Cicero who was as narrow-minded as he was eloquent and who had acquired his hatred for the Judaeans from his teacher, Apollonius Molo, once had an occasion to speak against the Judaeans, he hesitated to express his anti-Judaean prejudices loudly for fear of calling down the enmity of the Judaeans upon his head. The occasion was this: Cicero undertook the defense of the Praetor Flaccus who was accused of many extortions in the course of his administration of a province in Asia Minor. One of the charges against him was that he had appropriated the money, amounting to two hundred pounds, which the Judaean communities of Apamea, Laodicea, Adramyttium and Pergamum had collected as a contribution to the temple of Jerusalem. Flaccus based his act upon a decree of the Roman Senate that interdicted the exportation of money from Roman provinces, and though Judaea was a subject state it did not yet enjoy the distinction of being a Roman province. The Judaeans of Rome took a deep interest in the trial

of Flaccus (59 B. C. E.), and mingled among the public. Cicero remarked on that occasion that he should prefer to speak in a low voice, so that his words would be audible only to the judges and not to the Judaeans. In his apology, Cicero made use of petty sophistries that might have influenced the stolid Romans but could have made no impression upon intelligent men. Among other things he said: "It requires a high degree of courage to oppose the barbaric superstition of the Judaeans, and it is an indication of lofty character when a man ventures, in the interests of the Roman republic, to show contempt for the Judaeans who take such an active part in the popular assemblies. If Pompey had made no use of his rights of victory and left the treasury of the Judaean temple untouched, he did it rather out of prudence, so as to give the suspicious and the slanderous Judaean nation no opportunity for complaint; . . . When Jerusalem was still unconquered and the Judaeans lived in peace, they showed a deep aversion to the glory of the Roman empire, to the dignity of the Roman name, and to the laws of our forefathers; and in the recent war, the Judaean nation proved conclusively its animosity towards us. The fact that that nation was conquered and farmed out shows how little it is beloved by the immortal gods!" It is not known what impression this oration made, and what the verdict in the trial of Flaccus was. One year later, Cicero was banished from Rome, was not permitted to come within a circumference of eighty miles from Rome, and his house and his villas were razed to the ground.

Pompey's conquest left Judaea in a half subjugated and half independent position, and this indefiniteness of its relation to Rome subjected the country to the whim and caprice of the Roman officials. Antipater, Hyrcan's shrewd minister, en-

deavored to prolong that condition and to make it more oppressive. Despised by the people as the murderer of their liberty, Antipater sought the support and the protection of the Romans at all cost, and with the sweat of Judaea he assisted Scaurus in his campaign against Aretas, king of the Nabateans. Alexander II, the oldest son of Aristobulus, who escaped from captivity and came to Judaea, placed himself at the head of the patriots, armed them, and marched upon Jerusalem at the head of ten thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry. Hyrcan, or rather his master Antipater, could not hold Alexander in check, and fled the city. Alexander took possession of Jerusalem, and fortified it and the three strongholds of Alexandrion, Hyrcanion, and Macharus (59-55 B. C. E.). The venal Roman officials favored now the one party, now the other. Alexander felt so secure that he struck coins with the Greek and Hebrew inscriptions: "King Alexander and High Priest Jonathan."

However, upon Antipater's complaint, Aulus Gabinius, the governor of Syria, the most conscienceless of all the then Roman extortioners, put an end to Alexander's aspirations and banished him again to Rome. It was only with difficulty that his mother, pleading for mercy upon her bended knee, succeeded in saving his life. To weaken the people further and to disrupt the unity of the Judaean nation, Gabinius issued a decree that Judaea was no longer to be administered as a single commonwealth, but was to be divided into five districts, each with its own capital and with its separate council charged with the administration of its internal affairs. This council received the name of Sanhedrin, and was to have its seat in its respective capital. The High Council of Jerusalem was abolished. Southern Judaea was divided into four districts, with Jerusalem, Gazara, Emmaus and Jericho as

their respective capitals. Galilee which was not so thickly inhabited by Judaeans, was to comprise only one district, with Sepphoris as its capital. Members of the Sadducean aristocracy who leaned towards Rome and whose interests coincided with the Roman cause were placed at the head of the five Sanhedrin.

Though the aim of the dismemberment of Judaea was to give the death blow to the very heart of the nation, the High Court of Jerusalem, it failed in its effect. As that body grew out of the inner life of the people and was not forced upon it from without, its unifying influence could not be so easily destroyed. The partition of Judaea was hardly introduced when it collapsed again with the departure of Gabinius from the country. The High Court of Jerusalem still remained the heart of the people, though its power waned, owing to the untoward conditions in which the country found itself. It was at that time, it seems, that it received the designation of the "Great Sanhedrin" to distinguish it from the minor courts or "Smaller Sanhedria," though the Romans had shorn it of all political power. The two presidents of that body, after the death of Simon ben Shetah, were his favorite disciples, Shemaiah (Sameas) and Abtalion (Pollion), and in their maxims which have been preserved one may recognize the entire hopelessness of the times. Shemaiah impressed upon his disciples: "Love handicraft, avoid rulership, and identify not thyself with the temporal power." Abtalion used to say to his scholars: "Wise men, be careful of your utterances, lest ye lay yourself liable to exile, and ye be banished to a place of bad water (evil influences) which the disciples who follow you may drink, and die, and thereby disgrace the name of heaven." During the twenty-five years of their activity, in the course of which the

political power of the Sanhedrin dwindled still further, these two men gathered about them a circle of studious disciples to whom they imparted the laws, with their basic principles and practical applications. And so recognized was their authority in succeeding generations that it sufficed to ascribe a certain interpretation to Shemaiah and Abtalion to be accepted as true and decisive law. One of their greatest and most appreciative disciples (Hillel I) named them the "two great men of their generation." With Shemaiah and Abtalion Pharisaism enters upon a new phase; it places political matters in the background, and occupies itself rather with the study and the investigations of the Law.*

The political history of Judaea is a long series of uprisings against the Roman tyranny with their consequent oppressions, robberies, and desecrations of the temple which were almost of daily occurrence. Aristobulus and his son Antigonus succeeded in escaping from Rome, and arrived in Judaea. So oppressive had the Roman yoke become, that Aristobulus who hitherto was far from popular, was received by the nation with open arms and hailed as its savior. So many men volunteered their services that there was a scarcity of weapons for all who were eager to engage in the Roman war. Pitholaus, an old Judaean general, hitherto in the service of Hyrcan, now offered Aristobulus his services. With an army of eight thousand men Aristobulus attempted to restore the fortress of Alexandrion; with that fortress as his base he was

* The later Sopherim held, it is not clear on what grounds, that these two teachers were not Judaeans by birth, but proselytes; and legend describes them as descendants of Assyrian kings. It is certain, though, that proselytes could not have become the leaders of the people at that time. It is more likely to suppose that they were Greek-speaking Alexandrians, or that they lived in Alexandria a long time as disciples of Judah ben Tabbai when he fled from Alexander's persecutions. (Rab., Vol. I, 470.)

to wear the Romans out with a guerilla war. But, carried away by his impetuous temperament, he permitted himself to be drawn by the Romans into an open battle with the result that the greater part of his army was destroyed and the remnant fled. Still unsubdued, Aristobulus with a handful of men fled to Macharus, and sought to fortify it hurriedly. But when the Romans approached with their siege machines, Aristobulus surrendered after a siege of two days; and he and his son Antigonus were banished to Rome a second time (56 B. C. E.). A second uprising, led by his son Alexander whom Pompey had set at liberty at the instance of Gabinius, ended in a similarly miserable failure. He allowed himself impetuously to be drawn into a battle on Mount Tabor, and sustained a fearful defeat at the hands of Gabinius (55 B. C. E.).

Meanwhile, the three most influential men of Rome, Julius Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, formed a triumvirate, and determined upon breaking the power of the Senate and the nobility, and to take the administration of the empire into their own hands. The triumvirs divided the empire among themselves, each with his special sphere of activity. Crassus, greedy in spite of his proverbial wealth, received Syria, of which Judaea formed a part. On his march against the Parthians, he made a detour to Jerusalem, attracted by the well-filled temple treasury. Crassus made no secret of his desire to possess himself of the two thousand talents which Pompey left intact. To allay his greed, the pious treasurer Eleazer gave Crassus a golden bar weighing three hundred minas (about three hundred pounds) and the latter swore to spare the temple treasury henceforth. But an oath given by a Roman to a Judaean was of little weight. Crassus took the golden bar, the two thousand talents, and, besides that, also the golden vessels of

the temple, valued at eight thousand talents (54). Laden with this plunder, Crassus proceeded against the Parthians, but met with such an ignominious defeat that his Legate Cassius Longinus led back to Syria hardly one-tenth of his army of one hundred thousand men. The Parthians pursued the weakened Roman force; and the Syrians, weary of the Roman yoke, assisted them secretly. For the Judaean nation, also, the opportune moment seemed to have arrived for shaking off the humiliating yoke; but, as none of the Judaean princes was present, since Hyrcan was still helplessly entangled in the power of Antipater who ever clung to the Romans, Pitholaus gathered a large army which he was to lead against Crassus. But fortune deserted the Judaean arms whenever they came in conflict with the Romans. The army which was shut in Tarichea on the Sea of Tiberias was compelled to surrender to Cassius. At the instance of Antipater, Pitholaus was condemned to death, and thirty thousand Judaean warriors were sold as slaves (52 B. C. E.).

Once more did the hope smile upon the captive Aristobulus that he would regain the throne of his fathers and drive back the traitor Antipater to his Idumean obscurity. Julius Caesar, the greatest man Rome ever produced, threw down the gauntlet to the Roman Senate, and turned upon his former confederate Pompey. The fierce struggle between the two Roman chiefs caused the shock of war to be felt to the uttermost corner of the Roman empire. To weaken Pompey's influence, Caesar, who had remained in Rome, set Aristobulus free and gave him two Roman legions with which he was to support Caesar's cause in Judaea and in Syria. But Pompey's partisans succeeded in removing the Judaean prince out of the way by poison. His friends laid his body in honey; it was later brought

to Jerusalem, and interred in the Asmonean sepulchre. His oldest son, Alexander, was at the same time beheaded by Scipio upon Pompey's order (49 B. C. E.). The surviving members of Aristobulus' unhappy family, his wife Alexandra and his son Antigonus, found refuge with Ptolemy, the prince of Chalcis, whose son Philippion fell in love with Alexandra, Aristobulus' daughter, and married her.

The gigantic struggle between the two mighty rivals for the supreme mastery of Rome, naturally affected the Judaeans both of the home country as well as those who were scattered throughout the Roman empire. Events, however, turned out more favorably than could be expected. In Asia Minor there was a large Judaean population, particularly in Ephesus, the capital of Asia in Roman times, in Sardis, the former capital of the Syrian kingdom, in Pergamum and in other places. At the time when Julius Caesar made himself master of Rome (April, 49 B. C. E.), the consul Lucius Cornelius Lentulus received the order from Pompey to raise troops for him in the province of Asia Minor. The Judaeans also were to be impressed into military service. But such compulsory military service was abhorrent to them. Why should they shed their blood for Pompey who had reduced Judaea to subjection and had murdered two Asmonean princes? Moreover, in the course of war they would have to violate their religion in carrying weapons on the Sabbath and in eating forbidden food. Prominent Judaeans of Ephesus succeeded, however, in freeing their coreligionists from compulsory conscription. When the Roman tribunes came to Ephesus, the headquarters of the consul Lentulus, to raise the Judaean contingent, an orator by the name of Dositheus, son of Cleopatridas of Alexandria, probably a Judaean, arose with the declaration that

the Judaeans were Roman citizens, that, according to their religion, they formed a priestly caste; and, as priests, they were not liable to military service. As a consequence, the legate Titus Ampius Balbus who had charge of the conscription showed an astonishing zeal in his efforts at freeing the Judaeans from conscription, and he induced the consul to issue an edict freeing the Judaeans of Asia Minor from all military service (Sept. 19, 49 B. C. E.). The Judaeans of Sardis and of the Island of Delos also obtained freedom from conscription (May, 48 B. C. E.). The Judaean community of Sardis obtained also a favorable edict from the quaestor and pro-consul Lucius Antonius, renewing their rights to hold religious assemblies and to enjoy judicial autonomy.

On the other hand, Antipater who became a power through Pompey had no scruples in sending Judaean troops to Pompey's assistance to the theatre of war near Pharsalis, the battle of which was to decide whether Caesar or Pompey was to remain master of the Roman world (Aug., 48 B. C. E.). But as soon as fortune deserted Pompey and he met an ignominious defeat in Egypt, the crafty Idumean had no hesitancy in deserting Pompey's party and in going over to Caesar. In the dangerous position in which Caesar found himself in Egypt, without sufficient troops, with no news from Rome, and in the midst of a hostile population (Oct., 48, to March, 47 B. C. E.), Antipater developed an energetic activity in his behalf. He provided all the necessaries for the auxiliary army which Mithradates, king of Pergamum, brought to Caesar; induced three thousand Judaean troops to join the army of Mithridates; helped him conquer Pelusium; persuaded the Judaeans of Egypt, the garrison of Onion, in the name of the high priest Hyrcan, to waver in their loyalty to their king, the

last of the Ptolemys; and, in general, contributed materially to the victory of Mithridates. For his services, the almighty Caesar rewarded him with the full rights of Roman citizenship, with exemption from taxes for himself and his family, and with the office of procurator. Antipater was now in a position to dispense with Hyrcan's favor, and to appear as his protector in good earnest. In vain did Antigonus, Aristobulus' only surviving son, seek an interview with Caesar in the course of which he reminded him of the loyalty displayed by his father and brother to Caesar's cause for which both had lost their lives, while Hyrcan and Antipater had been supporting his enemy Pompey. Antipater, on the other hand, displayed before Caesar the wounds he had received in the present struggle in his behalf. And he carried the day. Caesar who possessed a deep knowledge of men, knew too well the value of the serviceableness and energy of a man like Antipater to pay much attention to the claims of legitimacy on the part of Antigonus. Was not he, Caesar himself, a violator of legitimacy? As a favor to Antipater, he acknowledged Hyrcan as high priest and Ethnarch (47). Judaea also obtained some relief. Permission was granted to restore the walls of Jerusalem; the territory that formerly belonged to Judaea, especially the cities of the plain of Jezreel and the city of Lydda, were restored to Judaea. Caesar exempted Judaea from the burden of contributing to the expenses of the war, and especially from the vexatious duty of furnishing winter quarters for the Roman legions; though the landed proprietors had to deliver a fourth part of their harvest biennially to Sidon, for the maintenance of the Roman troops. But this was not the only tax imposed upon them: a tithe of their annual harvest

was to be delivered to Hyrcan, a revenue provided for him by Caesar.

The shrewd Antipater, however, was not content to have his power depend solely upon Caesar's good fortune. What if the mighty dictator be overthrown by the republicans and the partisans of Pompey who were straining all their efforts to ruin him? He desired to have a decree of the Senate and of the people confirm for all time the power apparently given to the ethnarch Hyrcan, but in reality conferred upon himself. The dictator may disappear, but a decision of the Senate, confirmed by a popular decree in addition, was lasting. Antipater could count on Caesar's favorable attitude and he knew that such a decree could be easily obtained provided Caesar's friends could be induced to support it. Since Caesar himself was too deeply immersed in mighty, personal matters to concern himself with Judaea, Antipater urged upon Hyrcan to supply money, and plenty of it, for Caesar's friends, though the money was turned over to them in Antipater's name. The result was a public declaration in favor of the Judaeans. The pliable Roman Senate confirmed, as a matter of course, what was submitted to it and what Caesar had approved beforehand, to the effect: that the Judaeans were friends and allies of the Romans; that Hyrcan had rendered substantial services to Caesar both before and particularly in the course of his recent embarrassments, and, that, therefore, it be decreed that the dignity of the high-priesthood remain with him and with his descendants, that he be recognized as Ethnarch both within and without Judaea, that whenever any Roman province treats the Judaeans with injustice, Hyrcan be authorized to defend them, and to decide upon questions touching the religious liberty that has been granted them; that, furthermore, he, his descendants and am-

bassadors be received in Rome with respect, and be given a place of honor on the occasion of gladiatorial and animal combats; that the districts incorporated into Judaea remain intact; that Judaea be exempt from conscription, extortion and the duty of providing winter quarters for the Roman legions; that all these rights and privileges be engraved upon a tablet in the Greek and the Latin language, and placed conspicuously in the capital, and in the temples of Sidon, Tyre and Ashkelon; and that, finally, Judaean ambassadors, upon arriving in Rome, be presented with gifts of hospitality due to allies. This Senate decree was confirmed by a popular decree likewise. But all these rights and privileges redounded solely to the advantage of Antipater who was the real master of Judaea, and only the Judaeans scattered in the Roman provinces derived benefits from Caesar's favorable attitude.

Caesar was either naturally well disposed towards the Judaeans, or sought to attach them to himself because they were more dependable than the ever faithless and fickle Greeks of the Greek-speaking provinces. In recognition of the services they had rendered him, Caesar confirmed the Judaeans of Alexandria in the equality of citizenship they had enjoyed hitherto, as well as in the privileges of being governed by their own princes (Ethnarchs, Arabarchs) and of standing under their jurisdiction. The permission to export money as a gift to the Jerusalem temple, a question which had caused some friction for several years, Caesar granted by special order. He likewise protected the Judaeans of Asia Minor against their Greek fellow-citizens who sought to deprive them of their religious liberty, and confirmed them in the rights they had hitherto enjoyed. The Judaeans were not to be summoned to court on a Sabbath and were to enjoy the right of assembly which was otherwise

interdicted for fear of conspiracies; they were further permitted to build synagogs, and in general, were not to be molested in their religious observances (47-44 B. C. E.). If the Greeks interfered with their religious practices and the praetors or pro-consuls could not put a stop to such interference, the Judaeans of Asia Minor complained to Hyrcan, their protector; and a letter from him sent by an ambassador to the Roman governor, calling attention to Caesar's attitude and to the decree of the Senate, was sufficient to put an end to such interferences. As a result of such an embassy, the pro-consul ordered the Greeks of Laodicea in Phrygia and of Tralles in Caria not to molest the Judaeans in their observance of the Sabbath and of other religious laws; and a sharp word from the governor to the Greeks of Milet and Parium (a city in Mysia) sufficed to put an end to their intolerance against the Judaeans. The well-known friendship of Caesar to the Judaeans influenced the attitude of all Roman office holders. In some cities force was unnecessary; the mere mention of Caesar's attitude and of the decree was enough to render the Greeks docile. The city of Sardis presented the Judaean community with a site for building a proseucha (synagog), and the market officials were ordered to furnish the Judaeans with provisions in accordance with their own rites. Hyrcan, a mere shadow at home, was a protecting shield to his coreligionists in distant countries.

The Judaean community of Rome also must have received many favors at the hands of Caesar, since it cherished his memory so deeply. While all gatherings of the citizenry of Rome were interdicted for fear they might lead to uprisings against Caesar's monarchial ambitions, the Judaeans were granted the privilege of religious assembly. But all these liberties left the Judaean nation, as such,

altogether indifferent to Caesar, just because they were mere favors. While the extra-Palestinian Judaeans blessed Caesar as a benefactor, the Judaeans of Palestine saw in him only the Roman, the patron of the hated Idumean. Not a sound of enthusiasm or of joy greeted the publication of the liberties granted them. The people regarded all these occurrences with such peevishness that Antipater had to threaten the discontented with his own anger and with that of Hyrcan and of Caesar. Out of Aristoblus' shattered army, a certain Hezekiah organized a band which included some Jerusalemites, and withdrew with it to the mountains of Galilee, inflicted considerable damage upon the Romans and the Syrians, and was only awaiting an opportune moment to raise the standard of rebellion against the Romans. The Romans, of course, regarded the band as a robber band, and its chief, Hezekiah, as a robber chieftain; but the Judaeans looked upon them as avengers of their honor and their liberties. The people were still more deeply outraged when Antipater transferred the administration of the country to his sons, and thought of nothing else than of the aggrandizement of his house. Of the four sons his Nabatean wife Cypros bore him, he appointed the oldest, Phasael, as governor of Jerusalem and Judaea, and his second son, Herod, twenty-five years of age, as governor of Galilee.

This young man became the evil genius of the Judaean nation, and seemed destined to cast Judaea, bound hand and foot, at the feet of the Romans. At his very first appearance, he cast a sinister shadow upon the life of the nation, like a threatening cloud. True to the tricky policy of his father, he began his career by flattering the Romans and by outraging the feelings of the Judaeans. To gain the favor of the Romans, he undertook an expedi-

tion against Hezekiah's insurrectionary band, captured it, and, without trial or investigation, had every member of the band beheaded. The Romans and the Syrians were full of gratitude to the "suppressor of the robbers," as they styled him. Sextus Caesar, a kinsman of the dictator who had appointed him governor of Syria (July, 47—spring, 46 B. C. E.), heaped favors upon Herod for this deed. But the patriots saw, to their horror, that the basilisk had given birth to a venomous serpent; and they felt that, given full scope, the sons of Antipater would crush the body of the nation to death. The humiliation suffered by Hyrcan and by the nation at the hands of the Idumean family encouraged a few prominent men to call the attention of Hyrcan to his wretched position. They represented to him that his dignity was an empty sound, that Antipater and his sons had grasped the real power in their own hands and were dictating to him what steps he should take, and they pointed to the execution of Hezekiah and his men as a mockery upon the law. These words might not have had the desired effect upon the weakling Hyrcan, had not the constant wailings of the mothers of the executed men touched his heart. Whenever he appeared in the temple, these women threw themselves at his feet, and implored him amidst their sobs not to suffer the death of their sons to go unpunished.

Hyrcan's tender heart could not resist such appeals. He granted the tribunal permission to summon Herod to the judgment seat; and the members of the court lost no time in ordering his appearance before them on a given day to justify himself for the execution of Hezekiah and his men. Antipater, however, did not fail to inform Herod of the storm that was brewing over his head, and to warn him not to come to Jerusalem without an ample guard,

but not to bring too many troops lest he arouse Hyrcan's suspicion. Herod arrived on the appointed day, but with an armed escort and with a letter from Sextus Caesar to the effect that he would hold the king responsible for the life of his protegé. The day of the trial arrived which Jerusalem was awaiting with feverish impatience; and when the judges took their seats, the accused appeared dressed in purple, armed, with a threatening expression on his face, and surrounded by his armed escort. At this sight, most of the judges lost their courage; even those who were mostly embittered against him had to lower their eyes. Hyrcan himself was shocked. A painful silence reigned. Only one judge, Shemaiah, found words to save the insulted dignity of the tribunal. Calmly he spoke: "Does not he, accused of a capital offense, stand before us as though he was ready to murder us at once if we found him guilty? And yet I blame him less than I do you, O king and judges, who tolerate such a travesty upon justice. Know ye, then, that he before whom ye tremble will, some day, deliver ye over to the axe of the executioner." These words reawakened the courage and the conscience of the judges, and, in the next moment, they showed themselves as determined as they had been cowardly before. But Hyrcan was afraid of the enflamed anger of the judges and ordered the sitting postponed. Herod fled meanwhile to Dasmuscus where he was received with open arms by Sextus Caesar and was appointed governor of Coele-Syria (46 B. C. E.). Thus crowned with honors, Herod was about to avenge in the blood of the king and of the judges the disgrace offered him in Jerusalem, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that his father and his milder brother Phasael dissuaded him from such a step.

But he harbored the feelings of vengeance in his heart to give vent to them later on.

The far reaching shock that followed upon the assasination of Julius Caesar (44 B. C. E.), involved Judaea only in new misfortunes. Well might the Judaeans of Rome mourn for Caesar so deeply that they wept over his grave for several nights in succession. As far as Rome was concerned, the convulsions, the bloody wars, and the proscriptions were nothing more than the hard travail of a new order of things; for Judaea, on the other hand, they were the renewal of a fatal consuming disease. The republicans replaced the partisans of Caesar in Judaea, as in many other parts of the Roman empire, only to be quickly removed in turn. The republican Cassius Longinus arrived in Syria (autumn, 44 B. C. E.) to gather legions and money, and demanded that Judaea supply him with seven hundred talents upon short notice. Cassius was in great haste; every moment might find him deprived of power. Because the extortion was not delivered to him quickly enough, he cast in chains the inhabitants of the four cities of southern Judaea, Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda and Thamna, and sold them into slavery.

Even the purblind eyes of the unhappy puppet-king were opened at last to see that the officiousness of the Idumean upstarts was only a cloak for hiding their self aggrandizement. He therefore began to look upon them with suspicion; and, ever in need of a prop, he selected as his confidant a prominent person by name of Malich who had long ago seen through the treachery of the Idumean family. Hyrcan did not know as yet of the treacherous plot to dethrone him and to place the crown upon Herod with the assistance of the Romans. Malich, however, got wind of it; and, at a banquet given by Hyrcan, he placed poison in Antipater's

bowl, and the Idumean died (43 B. C. E.). Malich thought that the death of the old plotter would remove the cause of the evil, but he was mistaken. Herod was as determined and impudent as well as shrewd and dissimulating as his father. Upon the occasion of another banquet, Malich was killed by Roman legionaries upon Herod's command. All attempts to ruin the Idumean brothers failed. While Herod lay sick, Phasael defeated all his enemies.

The attempt to destroy the Idumean brothers made by Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, with the assistance of his kinsman Ptolemy, prince of Chalcis, also failed; and, upon Herod's return to Jerusalem, Hyrcan was compelled to crown him with the palm of victory. To rid himself of the fear of this mighty man, Hyrcan sought to attach him to his house, and betrothed him to his granddaughter Mariamne who was famous for her beauty. The victim and the executioner were to be united in the bonds of matrimony! Alexandra, Mariamne's mother, arranged this union which was subsequently productive of so many tears. Fortune smiled upon the Idumeans. All the political upheavals in the Roman world redounded to their advantage. The republican army was completely defeated at Philippi (Sept., 42 B. C. E.), its leaders, Brutus and Cassius, committed suicide, and the Roman world lay at the feet of the second triumvirate, Octavius, Caesar's nephew, Antony and Lepidus. Herold and Phasael trembled at the consequences this revolution might bring upon them; they had embraced the cause of the enemies of the triumvirate! Moreover, a Judaean deputation hastened to the victorious Antony at Bithynia, and complained to him of the usurpations of the Idumean brothers. Herod, however, soon succeeded in dispelling all the clouds. He, too, appeared before

Antony with glib words, and especially with shining gold; and, as a result, Antony recollected that he had formerly enjoyed Antipater's hospitality. He dismissed the complainants, and bestowed marks of distinction upon Herod. Through successive deputations the Judaeans protested to Antony again and again against the tyranny of the Idumean brothers, but the voice of the nation was silenced. Some of the Judaean deputies were cast into prison by Antony, others were executed. Herod and Phasael were appointed governors of Judaea with the title of Tetrarch (one of the four ruling princes, 41 B. C. E.).

Once, though fortune seemed to desert the Idumeans and to smile once more upon the Asmonean house. Goaded on by Labienus, a Roman republican fugitive, the Parthians under Prince Pacorus and the general Barzapharnes, made a successful incursion into Syria and Asia Minor, while Mark Antony was reveling in the arms of the alluring queen Cleopatra. The hatred the Parthians entertained towards Herod and Phasael as allies of Rome, received additional incentive by the promise of large sums of money on the part of Lysanias, son of Ptolemy of Chalcis who had married into the family of Aristobulus, if the Parthians removed the hated Idumean brothers out of the way, dethrone Hyrcan, and place Antigonus upon the throne of Judaea. The Parthians agreed to this program, and marched upon Jerusalem in two divisions, one following the Mediterranean shore, the other proceeding through the interior. Near Mount Carmel many Judaeans joined the Parthians, and their number constantly increased. As the progress of the Parthian vanguard seemed too slow for them, the Judaeans marched upon Jerusalem in advance, and, with the assistance of many Jerusalemites, besieged the Asmonean palace and attacked

the Temple Mount. The common people of Jerusalem, though unarmed, assisted the partisans of Antigonus whose numbers were swelled by the multitudes streaming into Jerusalem from all parts of the country upon the approach of Pentecost (40 B. C. E.). The Antigonists held possession of the city while the Idumean party was confined to the Asmonean palace and to the Baris. Pacorus, the cup-bearer of the king, soon reached Jerusalem and persuaded Hyrcan and Phasael to proceed as ambassadors to Barzapharnes with a view at settling the points at issue. Herod, however, he kept under constant surveillance. Arrived at Ekdippa (Kezib), Phasael and Hyrcan were immediately cast into chains. Phasael disemboweled himself. Hyrcan was retained as a prisoner after his ears had been mutilated to disqualify him from the highpriesthood in the future. Herod, too, was to be taken captive by trickery; but warned in time by loyal friends whom his brother had dispatched to him, he succeeded in making his escape at night, taking the female members of his family and his betrothed Mariamne with him, and fled to the fortress of Masada. The imprecations of the people followed him. Hyrcan was led by the Parthians to Babylon, and Antigonus ascended the throne. Believing himself secure on this throne, he struck coins with inscriptions in Hebrew: "Mattathias, the High Priest," and in Greek: "King Antigonus," with a garland of flowers or a cornucopia as an emblem. The Parthian troops withdrew; and the Roman garrisons that still remained in a few fortresses were destroyed by Antigonus. Judaea was thus cleared once more of foreign troops, and could, for a while, indulge in the sweet dream of a restored independence after a lapse of nearly thirty years of constant internal frictions and bloody combats.

As the early Asmoneans had gained the inde-

pendence of Judaea by adroitness rather than by military prowess, the last Asmonean lost that independence by his shortsightedness and by lack of ability to take advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves. Conditions were favorable for Antigonus to acquire considerable power. In Rome, the men of power were fighting against each other. The Orient which Octavian regarded with indifference had fallen into the hands of Antony who was devoting all his energies to the goddess of love in the person of Cleopatra rather than to the god of war. The Parthians had driven the Romans away from their borders, and were friendly to Judaea. Had Antigonus made any effort to keep alive the anger of the people against Herod and the Romans, the Romans themselves would have sought his friendship or alliance in order to embarrass the Parthians with his assistance. The mountaineers of Galilee were already outspoken in favor of Antigonus. Sepphoris in Galilee was transformed into an arsenal and a rendezvous for the partisans of Antigonus. Moreover, in the caves of Arbela determined insurgents were hiding who might prove dangerous to the enemy's rear. But Antigonus was neither a statesman nor a general. He did not even know how to utilize and direct the rich military material that was at his disposal. All his energies were frittered away on small things; his ruling passion, the hatred of Herod, paralyzed rather than redoubled his energies. He could not even climb to that truly royal height from which he might have looked down with contempt rather than with hatred upon the Idumean upsart. In the three and a half years of his reign (40-37 B. C. E.) he undertook nothing decisive, although the Roman subalterns who seemingly supported Herod remained neutral for the most part. Nor did Anti-

gonus understand the art of winning the friendship of influential men within the country who would make his cause their own. Even the leaders of the Sanhedrin, Shemaiah and Abtalion, though they disliked the supreme impudence of Herod, were opposed to Antigonus.

His rival Herod, on the other hand, possessed every quality that Antigonus lacked. He compelled fortune to smile upon him again the moment she forsook him. After his nocturnal flight from Jerusalem, Herod's situation was so desperate that he thought of committing suicide. His effort to gain the support of Malichos, king of the Nabateans, failed; and he was compelled to wander, alone, through the Judaeo-Idumean desert, without money and without friends. But he remained uncrushed, devising new plans. He went to Egypt. Dreaming of the throne of Judaea, he rejected the proposal of Cleopatra to enter her service as general. He set sail for Rome, and after a stormy voyage he arrived in Rome just at the opportune moment when Octavian and Antony again came to an amicable agreement at Brundisium. He had no difficulty in convincing Antony of the great service he could render him against the Parthians, and that Antigonus, placed on the throne by the Parthians, must be and must remain an implacable foe of the Romans. Antony interceded with Octavian in Herod's behalf, and Octavian could not refuse him. And so, Herod managed to have the Senate recognize him formally as king of Judaea within seven days, and declare Antigonus an enemy of Rome (winter, 40 B. C. E.). This was the second deathblow given by Rome to the Judaean nation, inasmuch as she placed the power of life and death into the hands of a half Judaean, an Idumean, who, in addition, had personal accounts to settle.

Thus crowned with the success of all his ambitions, Herod left Rome and proceeded to Acco (39 B. C. E.). The friends he succeeded in winning, particularly Saramalla, the richest Judaean of Antioch, supplied him with the money necessary for his enterprises. With this money he hired mercenaries, subjugated a large part of Galilee, and proceeded southward to relieve his brother Joseph who was besieged in Masada and was hard pressed by the partisans of Antigonus. This siege was prolonged because the Romans remained neutral in the war between Herod and Antigonus. Herod found it necessary to go in person to the camp of Antony who was engaged in the siege of Samosatar on the Euphrates. In appreciation of the services which Herod rendered him on this occasion, Antony ordered his lieutenant Sosius to proceed energetically against Antigonus with two Roman legions, and to place upon the throne of Judaea the choice of Rome.

Herod conducted this war with ruthless cruelty. He burned five cities in the district of Jericho, together with their inhabitants, two thousand in number, because they embraced the cause of Antigonus. At the approach of spring (37 B. C. E.), he began preparations for the siege of Jerusalem, after celebrating his marriage with his betrothed Mariamne in Samaria. With the arrival of Sosius with a larger army composed of Roman infantry and cavalry and of Syrian auxiliaries, the siege of Jerusalem began in earnest. The Romans threw up walls, filled in the hollows and erected siege engines. The besieged, though suffering from lack of food, defended themselves with the courage of lions. They made frequent sallies, drove away the workmen, destroyed the unfinished siege works, raised a new wall, and rendered the task of the be-

siegers so difficult that after a month's labor the Romans had made no perceptible progress. But the chiefs of the Sanhedrin, Shemaiah and Abtalion, advised the people to give up their resistance and to open the gates to Herod. Antigonus seemed to have neither the power nor the courage to punish the agitators, though many of the Pharisees refused to follow the advice of their leaders and remained loyal to Antigonus. These dissensions within the city weakened the resistance of the besieged; the assaults from without continued for forty days when the northern city wall yielded and collapsed. The besiegers took possession of the lower city and the outer works of the temple. The besieged, who were with the king, entrenched themselves in the upper city and on the Temple Mount. The Romans assaulted the second wall for two weeks; the Jerusalemites fought with desperate courage but succumbed. On a Sabbath day, when the Judaeans expected no attack, a part of the second wall collapsed, and the infuriated Roman soldiery rushed into the city and the temple, butchering without mercy men, women, children, and priests officiating on the altar. By an ominous repetition of history, Jerusalem was taken on the very day when, twenty-seven years before, the temple had been captured by Pompey (Sivan—June, 37 B. C. E.). It was only with great difficulty that Herod succeeded in restraining the soldiery from plundering and desecrating the temple; and it was only by giving rich gifts to each individual that he averted the destruction of Jerusalem. Antigonus was taken captive, sent by Sosius to Antony who, upon Herod's urgent request, and against all law and customs, had him scourged and then beheaded with an axe—an ignominious death that called forth the indignation even of the Romans. Antigonus was the last of the eight

princely high priests of the Asmonean family who had reigned more than a hundred years, and brought to Judaea greatness and glory in the beginning, and degradation and wretchedness in the end.